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THE PHILOSOPHY OF CIVILIZATION
PART II

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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CIVILIZATION AND ETHICS

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CIVILIZATION

PART II

BY

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To
MY WIFE
MY LOYAL COMRADE

PREFACE

I HAVE undertaken to write a tragedy—the tragedy of the occidental world-view.

Even as a student I used to be struck by the fact that the history of thought was always presented as the history of philosophical systems, not as that of the struggle for a world-view. Later on, in reflecting about the particular stream of civilization in which I myself was involved as a part, the sinister and inexorable relations existing between civilization and world-view became clear to me. Thenceforward I felt myself increasingly under an obligation to ask of Western thought for what it had really striven and what it had secured in the way of world-view. What solid results has our philosophy to show when once we have stripped it of its scholarly tinsel and spangles ? What has it to offer us in response to our demand for the elemental truths of which we stand in need if we are to take our places in life as efficient human beings working from an assured basis of well-founded ideals ?

It was thus that I was led into a desperate and unsparing struggle to assign things to their true places in reference to the findings of Western thought. I recognized and admitted that Western thought has been seeking for that world-view which is the only possible foundation for profound and comprehensive civilization. It has genuinely desired to attain to world- and life-affirmation, and to found on this real action, efforts toward progress of every sort, and the creation of values. It has striven to find a real ethical basis which shall provide a ground for the consecration of life to the service of ideals and of other life with a view to real and effective action.

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But this effort to find a convincing and enduring basis in thought for the world- and life-affirming world-view, has not been successful. Our philosophy has produced only fragments, always variable and unstable, of the world-view of real value of which it dreams. In consequence of this our civilization has remained correspondingly fragmentary and insecure.

It has proved fatal that Western thought has failed to realize the unsatisfactory nature of the results of its search for a securely based world-view of real value. Our philosophizing has become more and more involved in the discussion of secondary issues. It has lost touch with the elemental questions regarding life and the world which it is man's task to pose and to solve, and has found satisfaction more and more in discussing problems of a purely academic nature and in a mere virtuosity of philosophical technique.. It has become increasingly absorbed in side issues. Instead of genuine classical music it has frequently produced only chamber music, often excellent in its way, but not the real thing. And so this philosophy, which was occupied only in elucidating itself, instead of struggling to achieve a world-view grounded in thought and essential for life, has led us into a position where we are devoid of any world-view at all, and, as an inevitable consequence of this, of any real civilization.

There are beginning to be signs, however, that we are experiencing a renaissance in this regard. It is already recognized here and there that it is the duty of philosophy to make another attempt to provide us with a world-view. Usually this feeling finds expression in exhortations to philosophy to venture again on the path of "metaphysics", that is to offer definitive opinions regarding the spiritual essence of the world, where hitherto it has contented itself with arranging and systematizing scientific dogmas, or enunciating cautious hypotheses.

Not only in philosophical circles, but also outside these, does the awakening of the need for a world-view find expression as a desire for "metaphysics". Fantastic forms

of "metaphysics" are demanded and supplied. Personalities who believe and declare that they have special psychic experiences to communicate, and that they can thus help us to peer behind the veil of phenomena, offer themselves as the prophets of a world-view.

But neither the cautious academic "metaphysics" nor the pretentious fantastic type of the same is really able to provide us with a world-view. The notion that the way to a world-view must necessarily be through "metaphysics" is a fatal mistake, which has already had too long a currency in our Western thought. It would be tragic to afford it a fresh lease of life just now when we are faced by the necessity of working ourselves free from the toils of that lack of world-view which is the source of our spiritual and material misery. No further wandering of either a traditional or a reckless nature on the old aimless tracks, will avail to save us. Our only possibility of progress lies in thorough comprehension of and immersion in the problem of world-view.

It is for this reason that I am undertaking what has not been previously attempted in this way, namely the presentation of the problem of the Western world-view in such a manner as to induce and urge the Western search for a world-view to come to a reckoning with itself. Before making any further efforts it must acquire a clear understanding respecting two points. First of all regarding the overwhelming importance in the search for a world-view of the kind of world-view desired. For what are we searching? We are trying to find, grounded in thought about the world and life as possessing real meaning therein, the world- and life-affirmation and the ethic of which we have need in order that our activity may be of real value and may render our lives intelligible and purposeful. Once let our search for a world-view be completely dominated by the notion that everything revolves round these two fundamental questions and it will thereupon be secured against betaking itself to by-paths and imagining that in some happy-go-lucky fashion it will in this way reach its goal. It will no

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longer hope after a "metaphysic", thinking thus to attain a world-view, but it will look directly for a world-view and accept as a mere concomitant circumstance whatever "metaphysic" may prove to be its outcome. In short, it will remain elemental from every point of view. The second thing of which the search for a world-view must make sure in its attempt to attain self-orientation, is this, that it come to a clear understanding with itself as to the real and ultimate foundation of the roads on which it has travelled hitherto in its attempts to grasp that world-view, possessing original value as a source of power, of which it dreams. It is compelled to allow room for such deliberation, in order to make up its mind whether there is still any hope of success along the paths followed up to the present. Reflection as to the validity of the methods adopted to discover a world-view is long over-due. It has never been attempted. It is exactly for lack of this that our philosophy has been travelling in meaningless circles.

The method by which Western thought has hitherto attempted to discover a world-view, was foredoomed to failure. For it assumes as a basis nothing less than the interpretation of the world in the sense of world- and life-affirmation. A meaning is attributed to the world which permits us to explain the goal of man and of humanity as something really existing and significant. This interpretation is common to Western philosophy in general. A few thinkers here and there who dare to be un-Western and resolutely to raise questions regarding world- and life-negation or ethics, are mere side-currents, whose work does not affect the real course of the stream.

The fact that Western thought rests on an optimistic-ethical interpretation of the world, is not immediately obvious, for it does not always pursue this method openly. The optimistic-ethical explanation of the world is frequently embedded in epistemological conclusions; often it is veiled in "metaphysics"; often, again, it is so delicately shaded that it is unrecognizable as such. It is only when it has become quite clear to us that the sole intention of Western

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thought is to set up a world-view both ethical and characterized by world- and life-affirmation, that we come to understand how it is guided, consciously or unconsciously, in its epistemology, in its metaphysics, and in short in every move it makes, by its desire to construct the world in some way and to some extent as having a world- and life-affirming and ethical meaning. Whether it goes to work on this line openly or secretly, skilfully or unskilfully, honestly or deceitfully, matters nothing. This interpretation is essential for Western thought in order that it may be in a position to attribute a meaning to human life. World-view is to be the parent of life-view. It refused to consider the value of any other method.

But Western thought will only come to full knowledge of its powers by stepping out of the circle of its own self and defining its position with regard to the universal search for a world-view, as this search is known to us in the general thought of humanity. We have been busied too long solely with the sequence of our own philosophical systems, and have neglected the fact that a world-philosophy exists of which our Western thought is but a section. When, however, we come to see that philosophy is really a struggle to attain a world-view, and when we trace it back to the elementary reflections for which it ought to find a ground and which it is its duty to deepen, then we cannot avoid the attempt to adjust our own thought by that of the Far East, of the Indians and of the Chinese. Eastern thought appears strange to us because it is still mythical and crude in many ways, whilst in other respects it is highly critical and elaborated. But this is of slight account. The essential value of all thought lies in the struggle to attain to a world-view. The form is a secondary matter. Our Western thought, judged by its ultimate and direct expressions, is far more crude than we like to confess. But this fact is concealed because we have developed the art of expressing simple things in a learned manner.

In Indian philosophy we come face to face with the world-view of world- and life-negation. The form of proof adopted

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For this principle tends to lead us astray as a result of our prejudice that the world- and life-affirmation, which we Westerns are inclined to assume as a fact, is something more or less self-evident.

On the other hand the attraction and the tension between world- and life-negation and ethics which rule in Indian thought afford us glimpses into the nature of the ethical problem, for which Western thought gives us no similar opportunity.

The problem of world- and life-affirmation has nowhere found such elemental and comprehensive expression as it has in Chinese thought. Lao-tzu, Chüang-tzü, Confucius, Mencius, Lie-tzu and the others are thinkers in whose writings the problems of world-view, with which our Western thought is wrestling, meet us in a strange but impressive form. It is in our effort to come to terms with such thought that we shall succeed in finding ourselves.

Thus by forcing it to regard the general thought of humanity I design to induce the Western search for a world-view to search also for clarity with regard to its own nature and methods.

My own solution of the problem is that we must make up our minds to renounce altogether any optimistic-ethical interpretation of the world. If we take the world as it is it is impossible to explain it in any way which will give meaning to the ends and aims of the activities of men and of humanity. Our knowledge of the world is unable to furnish us with any data on which to base either world- and life-affirmation or ethics. We can discover no trace in the world of any purposive development which might lend significance to our actions. No ethical element of any sort is observable in the world-process. Our progress in knowledge consists solely in the fact that we are able to describe the phenomena which make up the objective world, together with their issues, with ever greater detail and accuracy. It is impossible for us to comprehend the meaning of the whole—and yet our concern for a world-view has no other object than this. The final pronounce-

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ment of our intellect is thus that as far as we are affected the objective world is in every respect an enigmatical phenomenon of the general will-to-live.

I think I am the first Western thinker who has dared to acknowledge as truth this crushing intellectual conclusion, and to be absolutely sceptical with regard to our knowledge of the objective world, without at the same time renouncing world- and life-affirmation and ethics. Despair of any attempt to comprehend the world intellectually does not involve for me a hopeless lapse into a scepticism which would mean our drifting through life like rudderless wrecks. It seems to me to afford us the very truth which we must dare to grasp in order to find in it that world-view of which we dream, a world-view which will put us in touch with reality and inspire us to action. On the other hand every world-view not based on despair of intellectual knowledge is artificial and fictitious, for it rests on an unreliable interpretation of the world.

Once thought has become clear about the relation in which world-view and life-view stand to one another, it is able to combine renunciation of all attempts to obtain a world-view based on knowledge with acceptance of world-affirmation and of ethics. Our view of life is not as dependent on our world-view as uncritical thought supposes. It does not wither away when it cannot send down its roots into a corresponding view of the world. Neither is it derived from intellectual knowledge, much as it would like to find a basis in this. It can stand by itself perfectly well, for it is rooted in our will-to-live.

World- and life-affirmation and ethics are both given in our will-to-live. They become articulate in this in proportion as it learns to reflect about itself and its relation to the world. The rationalist thought of former times aimed at intellectual comprehension of the world, and thought that by means of such knowledge it would be able to interpret the highest impulses of our will-to-live as possessing meaning in connection with the world-totality and the world-process. But these hopes were doomed to failure.

We are not destined to attain to such an understanding of the objective world and ourselves as forming a mutual harmony. In a cruder fashion we ventured the supposition that a view of life must be sought for in a world-view, in which, we imagined, it must necessarily be contained. Facts do not justify this supposition. Thus we come to see that our thought arrives at a dualism, from which there is no escape. It is the dualism of world-view and life-view, of knowledge and volition.

All the problems at which human thought has toiled go back to this dualism in the last resort. Everything that has been thought and written by mankind about views of the world—in the world-religions as well as in pure philosophy—is an attempt to solve this dualism. Sometimes the dualism is toned down to make room for the assumption of a unified, monistic world-view; sometimes it is allowed to remain, but re-cast in the form of a drama with a monistic *dénouement*.

The expedients adopted by thought in its efforts to get rid of dualism, are numberless. All that it has attempted in this direction commands our respect, even the most staggering crudities and the most meaningless acts of violence to which it has committed itself. For thought always acts thus from a sense of inner necessity. It tries to rescue from the abyss of dualism a life-view which shall possess real objective value.

Thought, however, can offer no satisfactory solution of the problem as a result of this continuous mis-treatment of it. We are invited to cross the ravine along tottering bridges of snow.

Instead of making further attempts to bridge the abyss with forced logic and misty phantasies, we must make up our minds to get at the root of the difficulty and to face its direct force, as we encounter this in actual matters of fact. We shall not solve our problem by blotting out the dualism which exists in the world as we know it, but rather by taking it up into our lives as something which has no longer any sinister power over us. And we shall arrive at this point

when we leave behind all the artificialities and fictions of thought and admit the simple fact that we cannot bring world-view and life-view into harmony with each other, and are therefore obliged to make up our minds to give preference to the latter. The volition given in our will-to-live transcends and is superior to our knowledge of the world. What is decisive for our view of life is not our knowledge of the world, but rather the positive nature of the volition which is given in our will-to-live. In nature we encounter the eternal spirit as an enigmatic creative force. In our will-to-live we experience it in ourselves as world- and life-affirming and as ethical will.

Our real world-view is our relation to the world, as this is presented to us in the self-determination of our will-to-live when it attempts to comprehend itself in thought. World-view is derived from life-view and not *vice versa*.

The new rationalism renounces the pursuit of the phantom attempt to understand the meaning of the objective world. It leaves the question of knowledge of the objective world undecided, and gives all its attention to the effort to attain clarity about the will-to-live which exists in us.

Thus the problem of world-view, nailed down to actual facts and treated by rational thought without any presuppositions, can be stated thus : What is the relation of my will-to-live, when it has become conscious and reflective, to itself and to the objective world ? The answer is as follows : Through the inner necessity to be true to itself, and to remain consistent with itself, our will-to-live enters into a relation with its own self and with all the phenomena of the will-to-live which surround it, which is determined by the disposition to reverence for life.

Reverence for life, *veneratio vitae*, is the most direct, and at the same time the most profound, product of my will-to-live.

It is in reverence for life that knowledge passes over into experience. There is no need that the ingenuous world- and life-affirmation, which exists in me since I am myself actually will-to-live, should experience an inner conflict

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because my will-to-live becomes reflective and does not understand the meaning of the objective world. In spite of the negative results afforded by intellectual knowledge it is my duty to hold fast and to deepen my world- and life-affirmation. My life bears its meaning in itself. And this meaning is to be found in living out the highest and most worthy idea which my will-to-live can furnish . . . the idea of reverence for life. Henceforward I attribute real value to my own life and to all the will-to-live which surrounds me ; I cling to an activist way of life and I create real values.

Ethics grows up from the same root as world- and life-affirmation. For ethics also is nothing else than reverence for life. Reverence for life affords me my fundamental principle of morality, namely that good consists in maintaining, assisting and enhancing life, and that to destroy, to harm or to hinder life is evil. Affirmation of the world, that is to say, affirmation of the will-to-live which appears in phenomenal form all around me, is only possible for me in that I give myself out for other life. Without understanding the meaning of the world I act from an inner necessity of my being so as to create values and to live ethically, in the world and exerting influence on it. For in world- and life-affirmation and in ethics I fulfil the will of the universal will-to-live which reveals itself in me. I live my life in God, in the mysterious ethical divine personality which I cannot discover in the world, but only experience in myself as a mysterious impulse.

Thus unprejudiced rational thought ends in mysticism. To relate oneself by one's disposition toward reverence for life to the manifold phenomena of the will-to-live which in combination make up the world, is to practise ethical mysticism. All profound world-view is mysticism. The essence of mysticism is indeed, that from my simple crude existence in the world devotion to the mysterious eternal will, which appears in the universe in the form of phenomena, is developed as a result of reflection about the ego and the objective world. Western thought has long dreamed of this

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world-affirming, activist mysticism. It could not, however, think out such a mysticism, because in its search for a world-view it always fell into the mistake of attributing an optimistic-ethical significance to the world, instead of giving itself to direct reflection about the relationship to the universe which accrues to man from the inner necessity of the deepest essential nature of his will-to-live.

From youth upwards I have been certain that all thought which thinks itself out to the end must find that end in mysticism. It was in the stillness of the African forest that I gained the power to develop this thought to full expression.

It is therefore with complete confidence that I step forward to press the claims of unprejudiced rational thought. I know well that our times have no affinity whatever for anything that is branded as rationalistic, and would like to dismiss everything of the sort as an eighteenth century aberration. But it will soon become evident that we shall be obliged to take up the same position which the eighteenth century defended so stoutly. The period which lies between those times and the present is an *intermezzo* of thought, an *intermezzo* which had extraordinarily rich and interesting motifs, but yet was all the same a fatal *intermezzo*. Its inevitable end was that we should founder absolutely in a total lack of any world-view or civilization at all, and it is the latter state which is responsible for all the spiritual and material misery amid which we languish at present.

The resuscitation of our world-view can only result from reflection—reflection at once inexorably sincere and recklessly courageous. Such reflection alone will advance far enough to comprehend how what is rational, when it is thought out to the very end, passes over of necessity into the non-rational. World- and life-affirmation and ethics are non-rational. They are not justifiable by any corresponding knowledge about the essential nature of the world, but form the general atmosphere or disposition in virtue of which our relation to the world is determined by the inner necessity of our will-to-live.

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We do not know what may be the significance for the world-process of action in accordance with this disposition. We cannot regulate this action objectively, but on the contrary we are obliged to leave the form and extent of such action absolutely and entirely to the individual concerned. Thus it is that world- and life-affirmation and ethics are non-rational. We must have the courage to confess this to ourselves.

When rational reflection is carried to completion it issues in non-rationality by a necessity of thought itself. This is the paradox which holds sway over our mental life. If we attempt to pass beyond this non-rational conclusion we come to a dreary waste of lifeless and valueless world-view and life-view.

Every conviction which possesses real value is non-rational and enthusiastic in character, since it cannot be the product of knowledge about the universe, but arises from the reflective experience of the will-to-live, in virtue of which we leave behind all mere intellectual knowledge of the world. This is what rational thought, when continued to its final conclusion, grasps and understands as the real truth, in the strength of which we have to live. The way to true mysticism leads us through and beyond rational reflection to profound experience of the world and of our will-to-live. We must all venture once more to become "thinkers", in order to attain to that mysticism which is the only immediate and the only profound world-view. We must all make pilgrimage through the realm of knowledge until we reach the point where it passes into actual experience of the world's essential being. We must all become religious as the result of reflection.

This rational reflection must become the ruling force in our lives. All the ideals of real value of which we stand in need are developed from it. The shattered sword of idealism cannot be re-welded in any other furnace than in that of the mysticism of reverence for life.

An elemental idea of responsibility forms part and parcel of the disposition to reverence for life; to this idea we must

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surrender ourselves ; forces are active in it which oblige us to revise our individual, social and political opinions, and to raise them to a nobler level.

And again it is the disposition to reverence for life which alone is capable of creating a new concept of law. The wretched state of our political and social circumstances is due in great part to the fact that neither lawyers nor laymen have at present any vital and immediate notion of what law really is. In the age of rationalism they sought earnestly for such a concept. They made great efforts to discover fundamental principles of law in the essential nature of man's being, and to secure the recognition of these. Later on these efforts were abandoned. Natural law was superseded and displaced by that which found its basis in its own past as the result of historical research. Finally we arrived at a point where we found satisfaction in law which was purely technical. In the realm of law this was the intermezzo which followed the era of rational reflection.

A dismal lack of power, of inspiration, and of moral force is evident in our legal consciousness like a sort of dry-rot. We are living in a period characterized by lack of any real feeling for law. Our parliaments light-heartedly produce statutes which are contrary to the spirit of true law. States deal with their subjects arbitrarily, without regard to the maintenance of any sort of legal conscience, whilst men who fall into the clutches of a foreign nation find themselves practically outlawed. We do not respect their natural claim either to a home, or to freedom, or to a dwelling-place, or to property, or to wages, or to sustenance, or, in short, to anything whatever. Our faith in law has vanished absolutely and completely.

Such a consummation had been inevitable ever since the search for a general notion of law, natural and based on rational reflection, had been abandoned.

Thus in the matter of law as well we have no course left but to take the thread up again where it broke off at the end of the era of rational thought in the eighteenth century. We must search for an idea of law grounded in a direct and

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absolute concept, itself the inevitable conclusion from our world-view. It is our task to unearth and proclaim once more the indestructible rights of man, rights which afford the individual the utmost possible freedom for his individuality in his own human group ; human rights which guarantee protection to his existence and his personal dignity against every alien power to which he may become subject.

The jurists have allowed law and the legal consciousness to become depraved. They were unable to check this process. For the thought of the time had produced no concept in which they could have anchored a vital notion of law. Law has been lost for lack of a world-view. It can only be recovered as the product of a new world-view. It must originate from the fundamental notion of our relation to the vital principle as such, as from a never-failing and never-stagnating spring. This spring is reverence for life.

Law and ethics have their source in one and the same idea. Law is that part of reverence for life which can be in some way or other objectively codified ; ethics is that part which is not susceptible of such codification. The foundation of law is the impulse to act humanely. It is mere foolishness to deny the connection between law and world-view.

Thus world-view is the nucleus of all ideas and convictions which determine the relations of the individual and of society.

Nowadays aeroplanes carry men through the air above an earth ravaged by hunger and robber-bands. This grotesque type of progress is characteristic not only of such a country as, maybe, China, but rather is, or soon will be, characteristic of the whole of humanity. An abnormal type of progress can only become normal as the result of the coming to power of a conviction which shall be capable, by means of ethics, of reducing to order the chaos in which humanity is involved. In the last resort the purposive elements in life can be realized only through the ethical.

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What an extraordinary circle of thought we have here ! Rational reflection, carried out to its conclusion, arrives by a logical necessity, at the non-rational and subjective, namely, ethical world- and life-affirmation. On the other hand that which is truly rational with a view to the formation and modelling of the conditions of existence of man and of humanity, that is to say, what is objectively purposive in this realm, can only be actualized if individuals consistently put into practice this non-rational and subjective principle. The non-rational principle of practical activism, with which we are furnished by rational thought, is the only really rational and purposive principle of that which is to come to pass as the result of human action. Thus it is that the rational and the non-rational, the objective and the subjective, proceed each from the other and return each into the other. On the continuance of this paradoxical interplay is dependent the coming into being of normal conditions of existence for the individual and for humanity. When it is checked or destroyed, the abnormal immediately develops.

In this book, then, I have written out the tragedy of the search for a world-view up to the present day, and I have suggested a new way of securing this. Where Western thought fails to reach its goal because it does not venture resolutely into the desert of complete scepticism regarding knowledge of the world, I have traversed this wilderness boldly and unhesitatingly. It is indeed but a narrow strip of territory which lies in front of the eternally green oasis of the elemental world-view that springs from reflection about the will-to-live. In entering on this new way toward the attainment of a world-view I am conscious that in so doing I am using, combining, and thinking out to a conclusion many tendencies in the same direction which have appeared in the course of the previous search for it.

But in this book I also record my conviction that the human race must be converted to a fresh mental attitude, if it is not to suffer extinction. To these pages, too, I entrust my faith that such a revolution of thought will

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actually take place, if we can only make up our minds to serious reflection.

A new renaissance, much greater than that in which we emerged from the Middle Ages, is absolutely essential—the great renaissance, in the course of which humanity will discover that the ethical impulse is the highest truth and the highest purposiveness, and will experience therewith its emancipation from the poverty-stricken sense of actuality, through the slough of which it now drags itself wearily along.

It is my desire to be a fore-runner, preparing the way for this renaissance, and to fling my faith in a new humanity like a burning fire-brand into the gloomy darkness of our times. I take courage to do so because I believe that I have succeeded in finding a basis for the disposition to act humanely, considered hitherto as merely a noble but unrelated impulse, in a world-view derived from elemental thought and capable of being comprehended by everyone. Thus it possesses a convincing power which it did not enjoy previously, and is susceptible of harmonious union with actuality in an energetic and thorough manner, and of becoming effective in such a union.

In concluding this preface I would offer hearty thanks to my friend Dr. John Naish, of Oxford, who has rendered the work into English.

ALBERT SCHWEITZER.

STRASBOURG, ALSACE.

July, 1923.

Note.—Two parts of the Philosophy of Civilization are now complete, namely, “The Decay and the Restoration of Civilization” and “Civilization and Ethics”. The work will be continued in two further volumes. In one of these, “The World-View of Reverence for Life”, I describe this world-view in detail, having so far only sketched it in outline as the conclusion of the process of setting it in its true relation to the previous search for a world-view.

The fourth part will deal with the question of the civilized State.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THE substance of the following pages was delivered in French, as a series of lectures, at Mansfield College in the spring of 1922. When, however, the typescript arrived from Alsace some weeks later, it was found that the author had written out his final copy in German—he being, like all cultured Alsatians, perfectly bi-lingual. Thus, although the lectures were delivered in French, they are, in this printed form, a translation from the German.

The translation has been carried through under the auspices of the Council of Mansfield College, to which body I would offer my sincere gratitude for the privilege of having been selected for the task—a task rendered more than congenial by my personal affection and admiration for the author.

My attempt throughout has been to reproduce Dr. Schweitzer's thought as closely as possible, avoiding slavish literalism on the one hand and any attempt at interpretation on the other. The Principal of Mansfield College, Dr. W. B. Selbie, has very kindly revised all the typescript, with the exception of the preface. For the accuracy of the translation I alone am responsible.

JOHN NAISH.

MANSFIELD COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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CIVILIZATION AND ETHICS

CHAPTER I

THE CRISIS OF CIVILIZATION AND ITS SPIRITUAL ORIGIN

The material and spiritual elements of civilization. Civilization and our view of the world.

OUR civilization is passing through a grave crisis.

People usually imagine that this crisis has been brought on by the war. This is erroneous. The war, with all that pertains to it, is itself only one phenomenon of the *débâcle* of civilization in which we find ourselves living, for civilization is wavering and tottering even in States which have not taken part in the war and which the war has not affected directly. The only difference is that in these cases the *débâcle* is not so apparent as in those countries which have been hit directly by the consequences of the uniquely terrible spiritual and material events of the war.

But is there any sign of living reflection about the fall of civilization and about the possibility of finding a way out of it by earnest toil? Scarcely. Ingenious people blunder around in seven-league boots through the history of civilization, and will have us to understand that it is purely a natural growth which blossoms in definite races at definite periods and then inevitably fades away, so that fresh civilized peoples must arise to replace those which are worn out. It is true that if they were obliged, at the finish of this demonstration, to show what races are destined to enter on our heritage, they would be in a difficult strait, for in fact we cannot point out any people to whom we could entrust such a legacy, even only in partial measure. All the races of the earth have been powerfully

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affected by our civilization as well as by our lack of it. They share our fate more or less. Nowhere do we come across lines of thought which can lead to a significant and original wave of civilization.

Let us leave on one side the ingenious wits and their interesting panoramas of the history of civilization and busy ourselves practically with the problem of our own endangered development. What is the real nature of this degeneration, and what is its cause?

One elementary point emerges which we must make clear to ourselves. (Our civilization is doomed because it has developed with much greater vigour materially than it has spiritually. Its equilibrium has been destroyed.) Through the discoveries which subject the powers of nature to us in such a remarkable way the living conditions of individuals, of groups, and of States have been completely revolutionized. Our knowledge and consequent power are enriched and enhanced to an unbelievable extent; and thus we are in a position to frame the conditions of man's existence incomparably more favourably in many respects than was previously possible. But in our enthusiasm for knowledge and power we have arrived at a mistaken conception of what civilization is. We over-value the material gains wrung from nature, and have no longer present in our minds the true significance of the spiritual element in life. And now come the stern matters of fact and call us to reflect. They teach us in terms of awful severity that a civilization which develops itself on the material, and not in a corresponding degree on the spiritual, side is like a ship with defective steering-gear, which becomes more unsteerable from moment to moment, and so rushes on to catastrophe.

In fact, we may say at once that the real essence of civilization does not consist in material conquests of nature, but in the fact that individuals conceive ideals about the perfection of man and the social circumstances of nations and of humanity, and that their general thought and dispositions are determined by such ideals in a living

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and persistent manner. It is only when individuals thus act on themselves and on the community as spiritual forces that there is a possibility that the problems presented by things as they are will be solved, and that a total progress worthy in every respect will be achieved. The question of how many or how few material conquests we have to record is not the decisive question for civilization. Its fate hangs on the possession or lack of possession, by convictions and dispositions, of power over matters of fact. The result of the voyage does not depend on the speed of the ship, whether it be a fast sailer or somewhat slower, nor on the method of propulsion, whether by sails or by steam, but on whether or not it keeps a true course and whether or not its steering-gear remains in order.

Revolutions in the living conditions of individuals, of the community in general, and of nations, as they take place in consequence of our great material conquests, make increased demands on the strength of our civilized convictions, if they are really to mean progress in the sense of a worthy advance of civilization, just as enhanced speed presupposes in a ship greater strength and stability in rudder and steering gear. Advances in knowledge and power affect us almost like natural occurrences. It does not lie in our power to manipulate them in such a way that they may influence altogether favourably the conditions in which we live; but they create harder and harder problems for individuals, the community, and the nations, and bring with them dangers which cannot be estimated beforehand. However paradoxical it may sound, it is yet true that through progress in knowledge and power real civilization becomes not easier, but more difficult. Indeed, in this regard, after what has come to light during our own and the two preceding generations, one may almost be permitted to doubt whether, in view of the material conquests which have been vouchsafed to us, civilization is still at all possible. The most general danger

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to civilization which such acquisitions bring with them consists in this, that through revolutions in the conditions of life great numbers of free men are transformed into slaves. Those who once tilled their own land become workmen who tend a machine in a great factory. Craftsmen and independent tradespeople become subordinate employees. They lose the primitive freedom of the man who lives in his own house and stands in a direct relation to the soil which nourishes him. In addition, they lose the extended and unbroken sense of responsibility of those whose work is independent. Their conditions of existence are thus unnatural. They no longer carry on the struggle for existence amid conditions in some degree normal, in which they can maintain themselves by their own efficiency, whether it be in face of nature or of human competition, but, on the contrary, they see themselves obliged to band themselves together mutually and thus to form a power which secures better conditions of existence for its members. Thus a slave-mentality arises in which civilized ideals are not thought out with the requisite clearness, but are distorted and twisted in the atmosphere of the conflict in which the thinkers performe live.

To a certain extent we are all slaves under modern conditions. In every walk of life we have to maintain a struggle to live which becomes harder from decade to decade, if not from year to year. Physical or intellectual over-work is our lot. We never have time to collect ourselves. Our intellectual and spiritual dependence increases *peri passu* with that of our material life. On all sides we meet with conditions of dependence which were formerly unknown in such strength and abundance. The economic, social and political organizations which develop themselves more completely every day hold us ever more firmly in their grip. The State, continually more rigidly and austereley organized, rules our lives in a fashion more and more clear-cut and comprehensive. Thus in every direction our individuality is crushed down; to be a personality is more difficult for us. And so the advances of external

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civilization bring with them a state of affairs where individuals, in spite of all the advantages which they derive from such progress, are harmed thereby in many ways, materially, intellectually, and in their capability for real civilization. It is due also to our progress in material civilization that our social and political problems are becoming so horribly intensified. Through our modern social problems we are led into a class war which shatters and destroys economic and political relations. In the last resort it is machinery and world commerce which are responsible for the world-war; and the inventions which gave such mighty destructive power into our hands have given such a form of devastation to the war that it has ruined conquerors and conquered together in an inconceivably short space of time. And, again, it was our technical progress which made it possible for us to kill, as it were, at a distance and to annihilate men in great masses, so that we came to lay aside the ultimate rules of humanity and to be nothing but blind wills, the servants of perfected instruments of slaughter, unable in their annihilating activity to recognize any longer the difference between combatants and non-combatants.

Material progress is thus not itself civilization, but only becomes civilization in so far as the civilized mind is capable of letting it so work as to bring about the perfection of the individual and of society. We, however, completely fooled by our own progress in knowledge and in power, did not reflect in what danger we lay through the lessened stress on the spiritual elements in civilization, but gave ourselves up to crude satisfaction about our magnificent material advances and lost ourselves in an unbelievably external conception of what civilization really is. We placed our faith in an immanent progress rooted in the nature of objective being. Instead of thinking out rational ideals and undertaking to transform actuality according to these, we expected to succeed with degraded ideals derived from actuality. And so we lost all power over actual conditions.

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Thus, just exactly where it was most essential that the spiritual element in civilization should be present in peculiar strength, we let it waste away.

But how did it happen that this spiritual element thus escaped us?

To understand this we must go back to the period when it was still present in a direct and living form. The path leads us up into the eighteenth century. Among the rationalists, who comprehend everything from the point of view of reason and attempt to regulate everything by rational reflection, we find the conviction expressed in its primitive strength that human mentality is the essence of civilization. It is true that they also are under the influence of modern advances in knowledge and in power and attribute a corresponding significance to the material element of civilization; but still they consider it self-evident that the essential and valuable part of civilization is the spiritual. Their primary interest is occupied with the spiritual progress of man and of humanity. In this they believe with a full-blooded optimism.

The greatness of the men of the *Aufklärung* lies in the fact that they set up ideals of the perfection of man, of society, and of humanity, and devote themselves enthusiastically to propagating the same. The force on which they reckon for fulfilment of these is human conviction—the mind of humanity. They demand of spirit that it should transform men and conditions of life, and rely on its proving stronger than the actual objective world.

But whence did they derive the impulse to set up such high ideals of civilization and the confidence that they would be able to realize them? From their view of the world. The world-view which is a part of rationalism is both optimistic and ethical. Its optimism consists in this, that a belief is embraced in a general purposiveness, ruling in the world and directed to perfection, in which purposive-

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ness the efforts of man and of humanity toward spiritual and material progress both find sense and meaning, and at the same time become secure of ultimate success. This view of the world is ethical because it regards the ethical as involved in the nature of reason as such, and therefore striven after by man, so that, setting aside his egoistic interests, he will give up all for the sake of his consuming ideals and will think of the ethical as the decisive standard of measurement in everything. The penetration of the world with humanitarian convictions is for the rationalists an ideal in whose way no consideration is allowed to stand. When in passing from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century reaction sets in against rationalism, and criticism begins to work on it, its optimism is reproached as shallowness and its ethic as sentimentality. But the intellectual movements which criticized and destroyed it were unable to develop along the same line the gift which, in spite of its manifold imperfections, it did confer on us, in that it inspired men to work for ideals founded on reason. Imperceptibly, but continuously, the energy of our civilized convictions melts away. Bit by bit, as rationalism is overhauled by the newer thought, the sense of the actual begins to take effect, until at last, from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, ideals are no longer drawn from reason, but from actuality, and thus we slide ever farther into a decadence of civilization and of humanitarianism. This is the most obvious and important fact which we can establish in the history of civilization itself.

What, then, is its lesson? The existence of a close connection between our state of civilization and our view of the world. Civilization in its true sense is the result of an optimistic and ethical world-view. Civilized ideals will only be conceived and brought to bear as convictions of individuals and of society in so far as a view of the world holds the field which is both affirmative of the world and of life and at the same time ethical. That we have not given to this relationship between our civilization and our view of the world the consideration which it deserves is

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due to the fact that there is so little reflection at all amongst us about the real nature of civilization. What is civilization? It is the summary and content of all real advances of man and of society in all fields and in every direction in so far as these are subordinate to the spiritual fulfilment of the individual as being the real goal of all progress.

The impulse to strive after progress in all fields and in every direction comes to man from an optimistic view of the world, which asserts that the world and life have real value in themselves, and thus carries in itself the necessity of developing existence, in so far as we can influence it, to its highest degree of value. Thence originate will, hope and action directed to securing the betterment of the circumstances of individuals and society, of nations and of humanity. This leads to the lordship of the spirit over the forces of nature, to completion of the religious, social, economic and practical association of men, and to the spiritual perfection of the individual and of society.

Just as the world-view which affirms the world and life, that is, is optimistic, is alone able to rouse man to action which shall produce civilized conditions, so the ethical element alone possesses the power of enabling him to persist in such action by controlling and sacrificing his egoistic interests and of keeping him continuously centred and concentrated on the spiritual and moral perfection of the individual as the real goal of civilization. Thus affirmation of the world and life, and the ethical element, conceive the ideals of a true and perfect civilization in mutual co-operation, and begin to put these into effect. If civilization stays in an imperfect state or degenerates, then in the last resort this is due to the fact that either the affirmative tone of its world-view or else its ethics, or both together, have failed to develop properly or have become degenerate. This has actually happened to us. It is obvious that the ethic demanded for the production of sound civilization has slipped from our grasp. For decades past we have accustomed ourselves in increasing measure

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to judge things by relative ethical standards and no longer to give free voice to an absolute ethic regarding all questions that arise. The abandonment of the resultant ethical judgment of everything we have felt to be a step forward toward reality.

Not only so, but our affirmative attitude to the world and to life has begun to lose its firmness. The modern man no longer feels obliged to think out and to put into action all his ideals of progress. To a large extent he has said good-bye to action altogether. He lives much more in inactive resignation than he admits to himself. In one regard he is outspokenly pessimistic. He has quite given up thinking of the spiritual and ethical progress of men and of humanity, which yet is really the essential life-germ of civilization.

This degeneration of life-affirmation and of ethics has its root in the peculiar nature of our view of the world. From the middle of the nineteenth century onwards we have lived through a crisis with regard to this. It is impossible to maintain any longer a view of the universe in which a sense of the real existence of man and of humanity is still recognizable and in which, consequently, the ideals which are the product of a thoughtful affirmative attitude and an ethical volition can be included. More and more we are sliding into a lack of any world-view at all; and from this lack proceeds the decadence of our civilization.

The great question for us, then, is whether we must finally give up the idea of a view of the world which carries with it in full force and wide extent the ideals of the perfection of man and humanity and of ethical action. If we can set up again a world-view in which an ethical and affirmative attitude towards the universe is a convincing factor, then we shall be able to master the decadence which is going on at present and to attain again to a real and living civilization. Otherwise we are condemned to see shattered every attempt to arrest our degeneration. Only when the truth that a reinvigoration of civilization

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can only arise from a fresh view of the world penetrates the general consciousness and becomes a conviction, and a new longing for a world-view sets in,—only then shall we get into the right path. But this truth has not yet begun to get hold of us. The modern man has still no real intimation of the grim importance of the fact that he is living in an attitude of thought about the world which is either unsatisfying or is equivalent to lack of thought. Of the abnormality and danger of this position he will only become conscious as the destruction of the sensitiveness and mobile power of the nervous system begins to show, and so makes it evident that its vitality is threatened although the system does not suffer actively. Thus our task is to shake up the men of to-day and set them again to elementary reflection over the problem of man's place in the world and the end of his life here. Only if they are again convinced of the necessity of finding a meaning and a value for their existence, and so become hungry and thirsty for a satisfying view of the world, will the necessary premisses be secured for a spirituality through which we may again become capable of civilization.

But in order to know the way to such a satisfying view of the world it is essential that we should be clear as to the reason why the struggle undertaken by the European spirit to attain to an affirmative and ethical attitude toward the world, after it had been temporarily successful and productive, came to an unhappy end after the middle of the nineteenth century.

Because our thought has dealt too little with civilization, we have given too little consideration to the fact that the essential thing in the history of philosophy is just this struggle to attain a satisfying view of the world. Looked at from this point of view, it unrolls itself like a tragic drama.

CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF THE OPTIMISTIC WORLD-VIEW

Western and Indian definitions of civilization. The fight for the optimistic world-view. Optimism and pessimism. Optimism, pessimism and ethics.

FOR us Westerners civilization consists in working at one and the same time toward the perfecting both of ourselves and of the objective world. But are these two activities, the internally and externally directed, necessarily inseparable ? Is it not true that the spiritual and moral perfection of the individual, the final aim of civilization, is only attainable in one way, namely, through the individual himself working at his self-development and leaving the objective world and its concomitant circumstances to their own devices ? What assurance have we that it is possible so to influence the world-process as to make it subserve the real end of civilization, the self-fulfilment of the individual ? How do we know that it possesses any meaning at all which is capable of development ? Is not every effort to manipulate the objective world a turning aside from activity concerned with my own personality, to which all that I do must yet be referred in the end ?

Touched by this doubt, the pessimism of the Indian thinkers and of Schopenhauer denies that the material and social gains, which form the sensible evidence of civilization, possess any real significance. The individual, according to this teaching, ought not to trouble himself about society, the nation, and humanity in general ; his sole object must be to experience in himself the sovereignty of spirit over matter

Such a process has, in truth, a civilizing value in so far as the final end of civilization, that is, the spiritual and ethical perfection of the individual, is definitely pursued. We Westerners may explain such a theory as incomplete,

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but we cannot be too confident about our diagnosis. Is the external progress of humanity really allied so inevitably as we suppose to the spiritual and ethical perfecting of the individual? Are we not forcing into an artificial connection things which are not naturally related to each other? Does the spirit which informs the one kind of action possess any real value for the other? We have not been able to actualize in facts that which we have set up as our ideal. We have allowed ourselves to become absorbed in the details of external progress whilst the inward development and moralization of the individual has come to a standstill. Thus we have not attained to any practical demonstration of the correctness of our view of civilization. And therefore we have no right simply to brush aside this other, less comprehensive, definition; on the contrary, it is obligatory upon us to find a place for the thoughts which produced it. The strains of thought characteristic of pessimism and optimism respectively, which have hitherto been worked out along separate and almost entirely unconnected lines, will necessarily become intimately related in the not distant future, a future of which we can already see the signs. We stand at the dawn of a universal philosophy. It will come into being as the outcome of a struggle—the ultimate struggle between the optimistic and the pessimistic world-views.



The history of Western philosophy is the history of the fight for the optimistic world-view. If the peoples of Europe have attained to real civilization both in Greco-Roman and in modern times, the reason is that the optimistic world-view was the dominant element in their thought, and succeeded in rendering the pessimistic view completely ineffective, even though it was unable to strangle it absolutely.

The various judgments which emerge in the course of our philosophizing have never any intrinsic or absolute value.

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They are always subservient to one or the other of these two world-views, and their real significance lies in this relation.

It is characteristic of the way in which the adjustment of thought takes place that the problem is never distinctly stated in so many words. The optimistic and pessimistic world-views are never ranged over against one another and thus forced to a definite trial of strength. It is more or less assumed as self-evident that the first alone is in the right. The only difficulties experienced, it would seem, have regard to the display of every available philosophical judgment to the best advantage in the triumphal procession of demonstrative proof, and to the striking down and destroying of every argument which may be brought forward on the side of pessimism.

Since the pessimistic world-view had never stated its own case fully and correctly, Western thought has always viewed it with a sort of lofty lack of comprehension. At the same time the West has always shown a curiously marked keenness of scent in detecting, and a characteristic attitude towards, any traces of such a view. Whenever it becomes aware of thought which shows too little interest in action directed to influence the objective world, it reacts instinctively towards rejection. It is unsympathetic to all objectively thought-out investigation of the reality of nature, because such investigation may lead to an insufficient stressing of the central position of man in the universe. Western thought wages a bitter conflict with pessimism, because it sees materialism as the final and inevitable companion of the latter.

The question of the optimistic world-view was really at the bottom of the whole discussion of the epistemological problem which continued from the time of Descartes until that of Kant. It was for this reason that the theoretical possibility of the degradation or denial of the world of sense was tackled with such persistent obstinacy. Kant attempts to lay a firm foundation for the optimistic world-view of rationalism, with all its concomitant ideals and

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demands, by positing the ideal nature of time and space. Only thus can we explain his combination of the most acute epistemological investigations with the naïvest possible *dicta* regarding world-view. The great post-Kantian systems, however clearly differentiated from one another by the matter and form of the speculations of which they are composed, yet are all agreed in crowning the optimistic world-view in their airy castles as empress of the universe.

To establish the aims of humanity in a logically convincing fashion as existent in those of the universe is the task to which the European philosophy of the optimistic world-view bends its energies. Whoever does not join in this enterprise or shows himself likewarm about doing so is *de facto* its enemy.

Western philosophy is right in its instinctive dislike of scientific materialism. Such teaching has done far more to destroy the optimistic world-view than has Schopenhauer. It is true that science has never expressed itself as a declared opponent of this view. When, after the breakdown of the great system of rationalism, scientific materialism sat at table with philosophy (which had now become more modest), it even exerted itself to chime in with the tone which the latter attempted to introduce into the conversation. In the writings of Darwin and others philosophical science made touchingly naïve attempts so to stretch and adapt the history of zoological evolution, leading up to man, that the human race, and with it the spiritual element, should appear again as the final ends of the universe, as they had been in the speculative systems. But in spite of these well-meant efforts on the part of the proletarian guest, it proved impossible to reinstate the conversation on its former spiritual level. What availed it that the guest tried to live above his reputation and profession? He brought with him a respect for nature and for objective matters of fact which was so great as to be necessarily inimical to the establishment of the optimistic world-view in any convincing manner. Thus science proved destructive of optimism, even against its own will.

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We shall never again take up the position of scorn and disrespect toward natural science which was formerly the customary attitude of philosophy. It is impossible to expect the return of a metaphysic which will permit us to find, as the old methods allowed, a foundation, at once logical and convincing, for the aims of humanity in the ends toward which the universe is tending. Thus the optimistic world-view is no longer either self-evident or philosophically demonstrable. It must needs renounce the attempt to find an unassailable basis for itself.

* * *

What is especially perplexing is the fact that the optimistic and pessimistic world-views have rarely emerged in clear-cut differentiation throughout the whole history of thought. They generally come to view simultaneously, but so expressed that one or the other is the dominant factor, whilst the influence of its opposite, though present, is not realized or admitted. In India pessimism obtains from the world- and life-affirmation which it tolerates a certain amount of interest in the external civilization which it officially denies. With us a pessimism which has slipped in unawares battens on the civilization-energies of the optimistic world-view. It is this pessimism which has deprived us of our faith in the progress of humanity, and it is due to the same cause that we are everywhere endeavouring to carry on the business of life with a set of ideals long ago dethroned.

Pessimism is a degraded form of the will-to-live. It is thus present in every place and period where individuals and society are no longer subject to the impulse imparted by all the ideals of progress, ideals which the self-consistent will-to-live necessarily evolves, but have come to a state of mind which leads them to a policy of *laissez faire* with regard to large areas of life.

It is when it thus works anonymously that pessimism is most dangerous to civilization, for then it attacks the best

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and most valuable ideas of life-affirmation, whilst it leaves the less valuable unassailed. It distorts the compass needle of our world-view like some hidden magnetism, so that the world-view itself is unconsciously diverted from its true course. Thus the unavowed combination of optimism and pessimism in the West results in our continued affirmation of the external benefits of civilization, which are a matter of indifference to reflective pessimism, whilst we abandon the struggle for inward perfection, which alone has intrinsic value. That impulse to progress which is directed to the things of sense continues to function because it has a basis in actuality, whilst that which aims at the spiritual part of life ceases to act because it is controlled by reflective will-to-live and works by incitement of the inward spirit of man. As the impelling flood subsides the deeper-lying objects are left stranded, whilst those which float on the surface are still carried onward.

And so we see that our degeneration, when it is traced back to its origin in our view of the world, really consists in the fact that true optimism has vanished unperceived from our midst. We are not a race weakened and exhausted by luxury whose task is to rouse itself once more, amid the storms of history, to a condition of efficiency and of idealism. On the contrary, we are hindered and embarrassed in our spiritual conflict by the very efficiency which we have attained in most of the realms of direct objective activity. Our whole notion of life, together with everything which derives from it, has been lowered and degraded alike for the individual and for men in the mass. The higher powers of volition and creation are becoming exhausted because the optimism from which they ought to draw their life-energy has been gradually and unconsciously sapped by the pessimism which has interpenetrated its substance.

Pessimism and optimism each go about masquerading in the clothes of the other ; this practice is, indeed, a characteristic attendant on the fact that both inhabit the same dwelling. With us at the present time what is really pessimism gives itself out as optimism, and contrariwise

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what is really optimism goes by the name of pessimism. What is commonly called optimism in current speech is merely the natural or acquired ability to see things in the best possible light. Such a view can only exist because we have a degraded idea both of what ought to be now and of our future. The poisonous germs of phthisis induce in the sufferer the so-called *euphony*, that is, a subjective feeling of well-being and of energy. Similarly, a superficial and externalized optimism comes to view amongst the masses of men when individuals and society have been injected with pessimism without being conscious of the fact. True optimism has no connection whatever with over-indulgent judgments of any kind. It consists in conceiving and willing the ideal, as this is inspired by profound and self-consistent affirmation of life and of the world. And it is because the thus correctly orientated spirit proceeds with its valuation of data clear-sightedly and without undue indulgence that it appears to the man in the street as pessimism. It incurs the slanders of vulgar optimism because it wishes to break up the old temples in order to build them up in worthier fashion. Thus it is that the only legitimate optimism, that of the imaginative will, has to wage a stern war with pessimism, since it is always necessary first of all to discover it under its guise of vulgar optimism, and to unmask it. The conflict is never ending. Nor can the true optimism ever rest in the confidence of victory won. For whenever pessimism is allowed to show itself in any form, it constitutes a danger for civilization. Thus action directed towards the proper aims of civilization is stultified even if we still retain our satisfaction regarding its external acquirements. Optimism and pessimism, then, do not consist in a greater or less amount of confidence in the existence of a future for the world of this present dispensation, but in the nature of the future which is desiderated by the will. They depend upon the volition, not upon the intellectual judgment. That the above inadmissible definitions of optimism and pessimism were current as against the correct ones, and that thus duality

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was merged in plurality, made possible for superficial lack of thought the trick by means of which it was deceived regarding the true nature of optimism. For this, false definition caused the pessimism of the will to be presented as optimism of the intellect, whilst volitional optimism, which was labelled intellectual pessimism, was rejected on that score. Both these false labels must be destroyed, so that unsound definitions may no longer continue to lead the world astray.

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What is the relationship of optimism and pessimism to ethics?

From the fact that the strife concerning optimistic or pessimistic world-views, and the struggle regarding ethics, are generally closely associated and even intermingled in human thought, it is evident that there are real and close relations between the two. Where ethics and world-view are concerned we commonly believe that in championing either of these we are defending the other also.

This assumed mutual relationship is very comforting to thought. Unconsciously we support our ethics on optimistic or pessimistic arguments, and bring ethical arguments to back up our optimism or pessimism. In so doing Western thought lays the chief stress on the justification of a life-affirming, that is to say, an activist, ethic, and supposes that it has thereby demonstrated the truth of the optimistic world-view. But for Indian thought the principal concern is to find a logical foundation for pessimism, whilst the basis of the life-negating, that is the passivist, ethic is rather a deduction from this than an object directly sought.

The confusion which arose as a consequence of the fact that the conflict about optimism and pessimism was not correctly distinguished from the ethical struggle has contributed more than almost anything else to darken

OPTIMISM, PESSIMISM AND ETHICS

counsel and prevent clarity in the general thinking of the human race.

It was easy to fall into this error. The question whether life-affirmation or life-negation is the correct world-view emerges in ethical discussion exactly as it does in the attempt to adjust the scales between optimism and pessimism. We tend to refer to another basis what is really an attribute of our own independent being. Optimism, therefore, relies on the support of the ethic of world- and life-affirmation, whilst pessimism looks to the ethic of world- and life-negation as a reliable prop. Accordingly, the result has been that neither of the two related systems had any firm basis at all, because neither of them was founded in itself.

CHAPTER III

THE ETHICAL PROBLEM

The difficulties involved in ethical perception. The true significance of thought about ethics. The search for the fundamental principle of morality. Religious and philosophical ethics.

How did mankind come to have moral perceptions, and how did it make progress in morality?

A confused picture is unrolled before the eyes of those who undertake to survey the ethical pilgrimage of the human race. The progressive steps of ethical thought are inexplicable, tedious, and uncertain. It is to some extent comprehensible that the birth and development of the scientific world-view should have been delayed. Progress in formulating such a world-view depended more or less on the existence of specially talented observers, whose discoveries in the realm of the exact sciences and of the knowledge of nature necessarily revealed ever fresh horizons and continually opened up new avenues for thought.

Regarding ethical questions, on the contrary, thought was left entirely to its own devices. It had to do only with man himself and his self-development as that worked itself out by a process of inward causality. Why, then, did it not move forward more rapidly? Exactly because it is here that man is himself the edifice to be founded and erected.

Ethics and æsthetics are the stepchildren of philosophy. Both of these, because they deal with the purely creative activities of man, touch on a realm which is coy in its responses to reflection. In the physical sciences man observes and describes the courses of action of objective realities and strives to discover the ground of these. In art and in the whole realm of technique he is creative and

THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN ETHICAL PERCEPTION

formative in that he applies his powers to that part of actuality external to his own self which he has comprehended. But all the same he follows, in the course of his moral and technical activities, impulses, theories, and laws which are products of his own mind. To find a basis for these and to erect ideals upon them is a matter in which only partial success is attainable. Thought lags behind its object.

This is immediately obvious when we see that the very instances and examples selected by ethics and æsthetics for investigation are usually unsuitable and often utterly foolish. How elementary, too, are the canons which emerge in both studies alike! What contradictory dogmas are maintained! It is but little assistance that an artist can derive for his work from the best discourse on æsthetics. And, similarly, a merchant who should seek advice in a book on ethics as to how he is to harmonize the demands of his calling with those of morality in this or that case, would seldom meet with any satisfying solution.

The unsatisfactory character of æsthetics is not a matter of great consequence for the spiritual life of mankind. Artistic creation always remains the affair of a few individuals whose genius is moulded rather by the observation of concrete works of art than by the results of reflective æsthetics. But in ethics we are dealing with a creative action shared by the bulk of mankind and determined by the fundamental principles which have currency as such in the general thought of the period. Therefore the failure or omission of any ethical advance which is otherwise possible is in itself a tragic event.

Ethics and æsthetics are not really sciences at all. Science, in the sense of a description of objective matters of fact and the demonstration of a basis for the inter-relations and effects arising from their intrinsic nature, is only possible when we have to do with a series of recurrent data of the same nature, or with a single fact which is one of a phenomenal series, and where, in addition, we are dealing with a kind of material which is patient of arrange-

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ment according to regulative standards. A science of human volition and creative manipulation is neither existent nor possible. The only data which come into the question here are subjective and unique, and their inter-relation lies hidden in the nature of the enigmatic human *ego*.

Only the history of ethics can be called a science, and even this only in so far as a history of the life of the spirit is itself scientifically possible.

There is thus no such thing as a scientific, but only an intellectual and reflective, ethics. Philosophy must give up the illusion which it has cherished until now. No one can really speak to another *ex cathedrâ* as to what is good or evil, or about the considerations which will furnish us with power to do the one and to avoid the other. It is only possible for a man to impart to others as much of that which ought to be an experience of all in common as he finds in himself, perhaps more carefully thought out and stronger and clearer than it is in the generality of his contemporaries, so that he sounds the same note as they do, though with greater effect.

But is there any sense in going over for the thousand and second time the field which has already been ploughed on one thousand and one occasions ? Has not all that there is to say about ethics been said already by Lao-tzû, by Confucius, by the Buddha, by Zoroaster, by Amos, by Isaiah, by Socrates, by Plato, by Aristotle, by Epicurus, by the Stoics, by Jesus, by Paul, by the thinkers of the Renaissance, of the *Aufklärung* and of rationalism, by Locke, Shaftesbury, Hume, Spinoza, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and others ? Is there still a possibility of going beyond these pronouncements of the past, so mutually contradictory, and formulating new convictions which shall possess a greater and an enduring power ? Is it possible so to combine the moral elements

• THE TRUE SIGNIFICANCE OF THOUGHT ABOUT ETHICS.

which are present in all of them as to produce a single idea of morality which shall unite all their energies in one ?

Does reflection about ethics produce more ethical action in the world ? The confused picture offered by the history of ethics might make us sceptical about this. But, on the other hand, it is obvious that ethical thinkers like Socrates, like Kant, and like Fichte, have exerted a moralizing influence over many of their contemporaries. Ethical revivals which have made the generations who experienced them better fitted for the tasks of their age have always followed a period of enthusiasm for reflection about ethics. When an epoch has lacked personalities who could force it to consider ethical problems, its moral tone has always been lowered, and therewith also its ability to solve the problems presented to it.

In tracing the history of ethical thought we are led into the innermost circles of world history. Morality is the first and greatest of the forces which mould actuality. It is the one essential piece of knowledge which we must force thought to yield to us. Everything else is more or less a by-product.

Therefore it is that everyone who thinks that he has anything to say which will advance the formation of an ethical consciousness in society and in individuals has the right to speak now, notwithstanding the fact that the exigencies of the time would fain limit us to the discussion of political and economic questions. That which seems untimely is really timely. We can only make an enduring contribution to the solution of the problems of political and social life if we approach them as men who are seeking to think ethically. Those who are really helping ethical thought forward in any real sense are those who are working for the coming of well-being and peace in the world. They are the real promoters of the higher politics and the higher economics. And even if their ability should only extend to the production of further ethical reflection, they have already produced valuable results. All ethical reflection

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inevitably leads to the elevation and revivification of the general ethical disposition.

But certain as it is that every period lives on the energies which have originated in its ethical thought, it is equally sure that up to the present ethical ideas have always lost their power of convincing after a longer or shorter time. How is it that the attempt to find a foundation for ethics has never been permanently successful, but always only partially and temporarily so? Why is the history of the ethical thought of humanity the history of incomprehensible halts and retrogressions? Why is there no organic progress traceable in the course of which one period builds on the attainments of its predecessor? How is it that the ethical state in which we live resembles a decaying city, amidst the ruins of which one race builds scanty dwellings in this quarter and another in that?

"To preach morality is easy; to find a basis for it is difficult", says Schopenhauer. In these words the problem is clearly stated.

Clearly or less clearly, there lies in every thoughtful effort to investigate ethical questions an attempt to discover some fundamental moral principle whose source shall exist in itself, and which shall unite in its own being the totality of all moral demands. But no one has ever succeeded in really formulating such a principle. We have only been able to unearth separate elements which have each in turn been proclaimed as the complete whole, until the difficulties that arose in consequence have destroyed the illusion. The tree of ethical theory, however vigorously it seemed to burgeon forth, never grew really high, because it was unable to strike its roots down into the ever-nourishing and well-watered strata beneath the surface soil.

The chaos of ethical views becomes to some extent intelligible as soon as we grasp the fact that the question at issue has to do with various interpenetrating and

THE SEARCH FOR THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF MORALITY

mutually contradictory views regarding separate fragments of the real fundamental principle. The contradiction is really due to the incomplete nature of all the investigations. There is something ethical in that part of the ethic of rationalism to which Kant objects, just as there is in that which he puts in its place, in that part of Kant's moral notion which Schopenhauer attacks, just as in that which he substitutes for it. The points in Schopenhauer's theories which are combated by Nietzsche are ethical, but there is also an ethical element in Nietzsche's arguments against them. What we have to do is to find the fundamental ground of agreement in which the dissonances of this manifold and contradictory ethical principle are dissolved in a single harmony.

The ethical problem is thus the problem of finding a foundation in thought for the fundamental principle of morality. What is the common element of good in the manifold kinds of good which we encounter in our experience? Does such a general notion of the good really exist?

If so, then what is its essential nature, and to what extent is it real and necessary for me? What power does it possess over my opinions and actions? What is the position into which it brings me with regard to the world?

Thought, therefore, must direct its attention to this fundamental moral principle. The mere setting up of lists of virtues and vices is like vamping on the keyboard and calling the ensuing noise music. Even when we try to establish our own position with reference to previous ethical thinkers, what interests us is the basis which they have found for their ethics, and not the way in which they have preached their theories.

Beyond this it is useless to expect success in any effort to find a plan in what has hitherto lacked any. Friedrich Jodl,¹ for example, in his *History of Ethics*, the most

¹ F. Jodl: *Geschichte der Ethik als philosophische Wissenschaft*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (1st vol., 1906; 2nd vol., 1912). He treats only of the ethics of Western philosophy.

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important work on this subject, is altogether at sea in his attempt to justify, and to attribute value to, all the various ethical standpoints in turn as supplementing each other. He is unable to establish a standard of comparison because he does not estimate them according to their measure of success in discovering a fundamental moral principle. Thus all that he gives us is a review of ethical theories, not a real history of the ethical problem.

Is it only the expressly philosophical attempts which interest us in our search for a fundamental principle of morality? By no means. Those carried on under the banner of religion possess equal importance. Our investigation must deal with the whole body of human research concerning this subject.

The setting up of a partition wall between philosophic and religious ethics is to be traced back to the error by which the former was regarded as scientific, and the latter as non-scientific. Neither has a right to this term, for both equally are not scientific, but the product of pure thought. The only difference is that the former has cut itself free from the traditional religious world-view, whilst the other maintains its connection with it.

The difference is only relative. It is true that religious ethics appeals to supernatural authority. But this is merely the form under which it makes its appearance. In actual fact religious ethics also, in proportion as it strives towards a higher plane, joins in the search for a fundamental moral principle, whose basis is in its own nature. An ethical thinker lives in every religious genius, and every profound philosophical ethicist is somehow or other religious.

Indian ethics is an example of the ease with which religion and philosophy pass over into one another in this realm. Is it religious? Is it philosophic? It originated in the reflections of priests, and for that reason is presented

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to us as a more profound setting forth of religious sanctions. But in its real essence it is philosophic.

With the Buddha and others religious ethics has the courage to take the step from pantheism to atheism without giving up its essential nature. On the other hand, Spinoza and Kant, who are reckoned as philosophical ethicists, belong, according to the basic trend of their thought, to the religious group.

The whole thing is nothing but a relative difference in the way in which the thinking is done. Those on one side approach the fundamental moral principle by a more intuitive, those on the other by a more analytic, method.

What is decisive is the profundity, and not the form, of the ethical thought displayed. The more intuitive thinker advances his ethical thought after the manner of an artist who opens up new horizons in producing an important work of art. The fundamental moral principle is revealed in profound moral claims, as in the beatitudes pronounced by Jesus.

On the other hand, the search of critical analysis for such a principle may lead us to a very impoverished ethic because of its refusal to take into account anything which cannot be brought into relation with the idea which dominates its particular effort. It is for this reason that, as a rule, philosophic ethics lags so far behind the current ethical atmosphere and has so little direct effect on contemporary life. Whilst religious ethicists launch out with one mighty word into the flowing currents of the deep, philosophical ethics often only holds out a shallow tray containing a mere splash of water.

Rational thought only, however, is in the position of being able to penetrate steadily and surely to the centre and essence of the fundamental principle. If it is but sufficiently profound and elemental, it must needs attain its aim.

Hitherto the weakness of all ethics, religious and philosophical alike, has been that it has not been in touch with actuality in the individual in a direct and natural

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manner. In many departments of life it has had little or no connection with objective matters of fact, and has spoken to the empty air as far as individual experience is concerned. In consequence it has not exerted any steady pressure on the individual. The result has shown itself in lack of ethical thought and the prevalence of mere ethical catch-words.

The true fundamental ethical principle in the large sense must be something extraordinarily elemental and intrinsic, which never releases a man when it has once laid hold of him, which speaks in a self-evident fashion through all his intellectual reflections, cannot be thrust aside into a corner, and is continually impelling him to adjust his actual life in accordance with it.

For centuries those who travelled by sea used to steer their course by the stars. Later on this imperfect method was superseded by the discovery of the magnetic needle, which, by virtue of a force inherent in itself, indicates where the north lies. Since then sailors have been able to find their way in the darkest night and on the most remote seas. The ethical progress for which we look is of the same kind. So long as we have only the ethics of ethical expressions, we are steering by the stars, which, however radiant their splendour, lead us only more or less certainly and are liable to be obscured by rising mists. On a stormy night humanity in its present state is left without guidance. But when we possess an ethical standard which is an intellectual necessity for thought and is developed in our minds to the point of absolute clarity, then we shall begin to experience a far-reaching ethical profundity in the individual and continuous ethical progress in humanity.

CHAPTER IV

WORLD-VIEWS OF RELIGION AND OF PHILOSOPHY

The world-view of the world-religions. The world-views of the world-religions and of Western thought.

In the world-religions we meet with great and effective attempts to gain an ethical world-view.

The religious thinkers of China, Lao-tzu (born 604 B.C.), Kung-tzu (Confucius, 551-479 B.C.), Mong-tzu (Mencius, 372-289 B.C.), and Chuang-tzu (fourth century B.C.), try to find a base for ethics in a world- and life-affirming nature philosophy. In so doing they attain to a world-view which, because its nature is optimistic and ethical, brings with it impulses towards a civilization both inward and external.

The religious thinkers of India, like those of China, the Brahmans, the Buddha (560-480 B.C.), and the Hindus, start from reflection about existence; that is, from nature-philosophy. They, however, lean to negation rather than affirmation of the world and of life. Their world-view is pessimistic-ethical, and thus brings with it impulses only to inward, and not to external, civilization.

The Chinese and Indian views of religion alike recognize only one unique principle of the universe. They are monotheistic and pantheistic. Their world-view has to tackle the question as to how far we can claim that the basic principle of the universe is ethical and thus become ethical ourselves by surrendering our wills to its guidance.

The monotheistic-pantheistic world-views come into definite opposition to the dualistic in the religion of Zoroaster (sixth century B.C.), in that of the Hebrew prophets (from the eighth century B.C. onwards), in that of Jesus, and in that of Muhammad, though this last is throughout unoriginal and epigenous. These latter religious

thinkers do not start from a basis in the existence which is revealed in the universe, but rather from a view of the ethical principle which is based in itself alone. They place this principle in direct antithesis to natural processes ; and, following out this beginning, they assume the existence of two world-principles. The first of these exists in the world, and is destined to be overcome ; the second is embodied in an extra-worldly ethical personality, to which definitive power is ascribed.

If the ultimate principle of morality is, according to the Chinese and Indians, life itself in the sense of the world-will, according to the dualists, on the contrary, it is something alien to the world in the sense of being an extra- and supra-worldly ethical Divine personality.

The weakness of the dualistic religions is that their world-view is crude, because it is unconnected with any form of nature-philosophy. Their strength, on the other hand, lies in this, that they contain the ethical principle in its immediate and unmitigated strength. They do not need to emphasize and to distinguish, as the monists are obliged to do, in order to be able to comprehend it as an outflow of the world-will which comes to light in objective nature.

At bottom the world-views of the dualistic religions are all optimistic. They live in the sure confidence that the ethical power will ultimately be victorious over the natural, and that thus the world and humanity will be uplifted to their true perfection. Zoroaster and the earlier Hebrew prophets conceive this process as a sort of world reformation. The optimistic element of their world-view vindicates itself, according to them, in a purely natural manner. They both will and hope to transform human society and to make the nations truly worthy of their higher destiny. For them progress in any and every realm is alike gain. They conceive of inward and of external civilization as essentially one.

With Jesus the optimistic element of His world-view is prejudiced by the fact that He expects the perfected world to come into being as the result of a catastrophic happening

THE WORLD-VIEW OF THE WORLD-RELIGIONS

in the natural world. Whilst according to Zoroaster and the earlier Hebrew prophets the interposition of God is to a certain extent merely the crown and completion of human action directed to the perfecting of the world, with Jesus it is the only thing which really counts.¹ The kingdom of God is to come in a supernatural way. It is not to be prepared for by efforts at civilization on the part of human beings.

The world-view of Jesus, because it is at bottom optimistic, affirms the reality of the final aims of external civilization. But, embarrassed by its expectation of the end of the world, it is indifferent to the efforts undertaken in the temporal and natural world by a civilization self-organized on the lines of external progress, and occupies itself only with the inward and ethical perfection of individuals.

But as the Christian view of the world develops the logical consequences of other-worldliness, and thus comes to see that the kingdom of God is to be realized as the result of a process of development which will gradually transform the natural world, it begins to be interested in the perfecting of the organization of society and in all the progressive movements of external civilization which subserve this. The optimistic element in its world-view has then a chance to function unchecked, and begins to work itself out alongside the ethical element. Thus it comes to pass that Christianity, which in the Greco-Roman world appeared as the enemy of civilization, acts in the modern period, with more or less success, as the world-view of true progress in all departments of life.

The questions which have gained currency and significance in the course of the struggle for the ethical and optimistic-ethical world-view carried on in the world-religions, are the very same which have continuously agitated Western philosophy. The great problem is that

¹ *Das Einige, das in Betracht kommt.*

WORLD-VIEWS OF RELIGION AND OF PHILOSOPHY

presented by the attempt to relate the universe and the ethical principle.

The three types of world-view which arise in the world-religions also appear in Western philosophy. This also either attempts to base ethics in nature-philosophy, whether this be affirmative or negative toward the world and life, or else, cutting itself more or less free from nature-philosophy, strives to attain to a world-view which shall be ethical in its own right. It does the utmost possible, however, to avoid exposing, and to disguise, the crudity and the dualism which are actually and inevitably involved in this third course.

Thus the world-views of the world-religions on the one hand and of Western philosophy on the other do not belong to different universes, but are, on the contrary, intimately related. The distinction drawn between religious and philosophical world-views is really entirely fluid. The religious world-view which seeks to comprehend itself in thought is *ipso facto* philosophic. This philosophizing of religion takes place amongst the Chinese and Indians. But, conversely, a philosophic world-view which is truly profound takes on a religious character.

Although Western thought approaches the problem of world-view ostensibly without any presuppositions, yet it has not been able to detach itself completely from the world-views of religion. It has taken over its deciding impulses from Christianity. It has busied itself more than it would confess with the attempt to think out the crudely ethical world-view of Jesus into a philosophical system. With Schopenhauer and his followers the pessimistic monism of India has also come to expression in the West, and has enriched reflection about the essential nature of the ethical motive.

Thus the energetic forces of all the great world-views have flowed into the stream of Western thought. Through this co-operation of different strains of thought and various types of energy it has become capable of lifting the optimistic-ethical world-view, of which it constantly dreams,

THE WORLD-VIEWS OF THE WORLD-RELIGIONS AND OF WESTERN THOUGHT

to the level of a general conviction of a strength never attained anywhere else. This explains how it is that the West has excelled both in inward and in external civilization.

Western philosophy has been as little able as any of the world-religions to find a reliable basis for the optimistic-ethical world-view. It is just because the West has been the scene in which the problem of the world-view has appeared in its most universal and vital form that it has also furnished the arena in which the greatest examples alike of progress in and of destruction of the ideals of civilization have taken place. It has experienced the most fateful fluctuations of world-view and also fearful periods of lack of any world-view at all.

It is due to its lively interest not only in one, but in all the lines of philosophic investigation, that it is in Western thought that the problems and difficulties in which the search for the optimistic-ethical world-view is involved come to light most clearly.

To what extent does the history of our thought furnish for us Westerners an explanation of our fate? In what direction does it point out the road for future pursuit of a world-view in which the individual may find inward certitude and power and humanity may attain to progress and to peace?

CHAPTER V

ETHICS AND CIVILIZATION IN GRECO-ROMAN PHILOSOPHY

Beginnings. Socrates Rationalistic ethics . . . hedonist ethics . . . Epicureanism and Stoicism . . . the ethics of resignation Plato's abstract root-principle of moral conduct The ethics of world denial Aristotle substitutes his doctrine of virtues for ethics. The ideal of the civilized State according to Plato and Aristotle. Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius. Ethical sayings of Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. The optimistic-ethical world-view of the later Stoicism and its ultimate faith.

FROM the seventh century B.C. onwards the Greek spirit begins to shake itself free from the view of the world involved in the traditional religious ideas of the time, and undertakes to found a new concept on pure thought and intellectual knowledge. First of all, nature philosophy comes into existence as a result of investigation of the actual and reflection about its being. Following on this, criticism begins its work. Simple faith in the gods is felt to be unsatisfying, not only because the processes of nature do not find a sufficient explanation in the rule of the dwellers on Olympus, but also because these personalities no longer correspond to the moral experience of thoughtful men. In the sixth century B.C. we find nature-philosophy and criticism combined in Xenophanes and in Heraclitus.

In the course of the fifth century B.C. the sophists make their appearance, and begin to busy themselves with standards of value affecting the social life of the community and the moral conduct of the individual. The result is destructive. The more moderate among these leaders of enlightenment declared that the great majority of moral criteria are simply the demands of the community. In so doing, however, they left open the possibility that a small remainder are the product of rational reflection, as having something inherently moral in its own nature. The younger

and more radical section of the sophists, on the other hand, adopted the thesis that all morality, as also practical systems of law, has been invented by organized society in its own interest. The man who has freed himself from tutelage will form his own "moral" standards for himself, and follow his own pleasure and his own profit in everything. Thus Western philosophic thought strikes a shrill note of dissonance in its first attempt to deal with the problem of ethics and civilization.

What did Socrates accomplish in his attempt to stem this tendency? In place of simple hedonism he substitutes a rational hedonism. He maintains that a standard of conduct can be based on rational reflection, a standard in which the happiness of the individual, rightly comprehended, coincides with the interests of the community. Virtue is true knowledge.

That the rationally moral is that which affords the doer true pleasure, or, what is the same thing, true profit—this thesis leads Socrates, in the simple occasional conversations which Xenophon has recorded for us in his *Memorabilia*, in the most widely divergent directions.¹ In the Platonic dialogues we see him going beyond this primitive utilitarianism and searching for an intrinsic idea of the good, which aims at the well-being of the soul and is related to absolute beauty.² We cannot now distinguish how much of this more advanced view actually belonged to the master himself and how much of his own thoughts the disciple afterwards put into the master's mouth. That Socrates used to speak of a secret inner voice, ὁ δαίμων, as the highest moral authority in a man, is certain; it is mentioned

¹ Xenophon, one of the generals who led the ten thousand back from Asia, wrote down his memories of Socrates after the latter's death. In reporting the simple discourses of the master, he had no view the refutation for all posterity of the charge brought against Socrates of having corrupted the youth of Athens and taught atheism. For even after the death of the sage rhetors continued to publish such charges against him. Xenophon's unadorned and realistic sketch of Socrates is extraordinarily valuable.

² The principal dialogues which we have to consider are the *Protagoras*, the *Gorgias*, the *Phædrus*, the *Symposium*, the *Phædo*, and the *Philebus*.

in the contemporary indictment drawn up against him. His utilitarian rationalism thus expands into a sort of mysticism. An empirical ethic—that is, one growing out of and developed in accordance with experience—and an intuitive ethic dwell side by side in his mind, undistinguished from one another, but destined to be separated and developed by his disciples as opposition schools, the Cynics and Cyrenaics on the one hand and Plato on the other.

Was Socrates conscious that in making the moral rest on a rational-hedonist basis he only went part of the way and halted at the point where the real difficulty resides, namely, the demonstration of the existence of a universal moral content, inherent in every reasoning mind? Or was he so simple as to take his general formal result for the solution of the problem?

From the confidence with which he enters on the stage we may presume the latter. His ingenuousness is indeed his strength. At the dangerous moment when Western thought finds itself in the situation of being obliged to philosophize about morality in order to check the disruption of Greek society introduced by a reckless and litigious school of thought, the sage of Athens destroys scepticism by the mighty earnestness of his conviction that it is possible to determine the nature of the moral by reflection. He does not advance beyond this general position. He is responsible for the earnest spirit in which the ancient world tackled the problem after his time. What, we may well ask, would that world have become without him? The position of indifference which Socrates takes up with regard to philosophical efforts to attain a complete view of the world is characteristic of this preliminary stage of moral philosophizing in the West. He takes no interest either in the results of investigation of the physical universe or in those of epistemological research, but occupies himself solely with the human individual and his relation to himself and to the community. Lao-tzü, Confucius, the Indians, Zoroaster, the Hebrew prophets and Jesus seem to compre-

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hend ethics in some way or other as either derived from, or involved in, a view of the universe. Socrates finds ethics on itself. Against a similar scenic background, devoid of any thorough perspective, the utilitarians of all the centuries have played their parts as his successors. Here a noteworthy point emerges. In attempting to get at the real content of the moral the best results will be obtained by considering the ethical principle by itself, quite apart from any theory of the universe. It is also the most practical method. But this isolation is unnatural. The thought that ethics must necessarily be rooted in a theory of the universe and is imperfect till completed by such a theory, *i.e.* that one's relation to one's neighbour and to the community is eventually rooted in a relation to the objective universe, seems to retain its place by a natural right. Continually, therefore, already in Plato, and then in Epicurus and the Stoic philosophy, ethics experiences the need of relating itself again with a theory of the universe. This process continues in modern thought, but the practical search for the content of the ethical remains a prerogative of those who busy themselves with ethics. With Socrates the ethical mysticism of resignation to the inward voice takes the place of a complete theory of the universe, which is necessary to afford a ground for the determination of a man's ethical actions.

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Socrates leaves three tasks for his successors : to determine the content of that which is rationally useful to one's neighbour, to establish a universal general idea of the good, and to think out a system of ethics which involves, and is consistent with, a definite theory of the universe. How far were those thinkers successful who busied themselves with the first problem and sought to determine the ethical value of the rationally useful by the amount of pleasure yielded ? Whenever the idea of pleasure is brought into connection with the ethical it wavers and gives uncertain

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disturbances—indications like the needle of a magnet in the neighbourhood of the pole. Unqualified pleasure, shows itself as quite irreconcilable in every respect with the demands of ethics ; and so it is given up. The qualified form of enduring pleasure is substituted for it, but this is not a sufficient retreat from the original position. At bottom there is no enduring pleasure but the spiritual. But even this position cannot be maintained. Reflection about the ethical action which really brings happiness sees itself obliged at the end of the day to give up positive hedonism, in whatever disguise it may appear. It is obliged to ally itself with the negative idea which comprehends pleasure in some way or other as release from the thirst for pleasure. Individualist utilitarianism, also called Eudæmonism, thus attempts to be consistent with itself in so far as it dares ; this is the paradox which reveals itself in ancient ethics. Instead of ripening fully in the following generations, the rationalist ethical life-ideal set up by Socrates falls a prey to sickly disease because the idea of pleasure which is involved in it denies itself in the very attempt to think itself out clearly.

Aristippus (*c.* 435–395 B.C.), the founder of the Cyrenaic school, Democritus of Abdera (*c.* 450–360 B.C.), the originator of the atomic theory, and Epicurus (341–270 B.C.) seek to retain as much as possible of the positive hedonist idea. The Cynic school of Antisthenes (born *c.* 440 B.C.) and that of the Stoics, founded by Zeno of Kition, in Cyprus (*c.* 336–264 B.C.), proceed in the opposite and negative direction.¹ The final result is the same in both cases. Epicurus finds himself obliged in the end to proclaim freedom from desire as itself the purest pleasure and

¹ Almost nothing has been preserved of the writings of the Cyrenaics, the Cynics, Democritus, Epicurus, Zeno, and the older Stoics. Our information about them is derived for the most part from Diogenes Lærtius.

The philosophers who affirm pleasure as the end are called Cyrenaics because Aristippus, the founder of the "joyous world-wisdom", came from Cyrene. The Cynics, the "dog-philosophers", got their name from the fact that they despised the amenities of life and piqued themselves on their uncouth and primitive way of living. The best known amongst them is Diogenes of Sinope (died 323 B.C.), who, according to Diogenes Lærtius, began his career as a forger and ended it as a slave.

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moors his bark alongside the same quay of resignation whither the Stoics also betake themselves. The fundamental difference between the two great philosophical schools of antiquity does not lie in the ethical criterion which they offer to men. With regard to what the "wise man" will do and permit both often express themselves in identical fashion. What does distinguish them is the view of the universe with which their ethics are respectively involved. Epicureanism professes the atomistic materialism of Democritus; it is atheistic, and maintains the ephemeral nature of the soul, and is a-religious in every respect. Stoicism is pantheistic.

With both Epicurus and Zeno ethics gives up hope of being able to exist for and by itself. It sees the necessity of making itself intelligible as part of some theory of existence. Along this track Epicurus is led exclusively by his desire to penetrate to the abstract truth of reality. He gives full play to a purely scientific knowledge of the world. He never allows ethics to talk round and about our knowledge of existence and to exploit such knowledge for its own profit. He cares not a straw how much his ethical theories may be enriched or impoverished during this search. He has but one aim: the attainment of a true view of the world. The awe-inspiring greatness of Epicurus is due to this very reckless sincerity.

Stoicism attempts to meet our need of some satisfying and final view of things. Like the Chinese monists, it is out to find some "sense" in the evil of the universe. It tries to broaden out the ethical rationalism of Socrates into a cosmic explanation. The moral principle is made to present itself in the form of the world-reason revealed in its relations with things of sense. Stoicism has a confused notion of optimistic-ethical affirmation as a life ideal to be striven for, but it never actually attains to a clear presentation of this. It does not possess a sufficiently unaffected simplicity, for the naive ethical nature-

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philosophy which we meet with in Lao-tzü and in the older philosophical Taoism. It is always trying to discover the concept of sensible action in the world reason, but constantly finds itself thrown back merely on that of action alone, without further qualification. The result is that the ethical notions with which it works have too little universalism in their nature to develop a natural relation with the world-reason. Stoicism is, as we should expect from its origins, always dominated by the problem of pleasure and pain.

On that very account it possesses no effective instinct regarding the nature of action. Its horizons are narrow because still determined by the problems which agitated the municipality and the little city-state of the classical world. It has not advanced far enough to enter into the thought of a nature-philosophy which busies itself with the universe and with mankind. At the same time it feels within itself the necessity for such a philosophy.

The oscillation so characteristic of Stoicism has, therefore, this effect: that its results do not correspond to its aspirations, but rather fall far short of them. The spirit of the old classical world looks for an optimistic-ethical life-affirmation in nature-philosophy. It yearns to find justified in such a philosophy the instinct toward confident active endeavour which it has brought with it from a simpler age. But it is unable to do so. Wherever it arrives at a definite result it becomes clear to its thinkers that reflection about the universe only leads to resignation, and that to live in harmony with the universe means to allow oneself to be carried along by the flood of world-happenings, and to vanish quietly into that flood when one's hour comes, without complaint.

It is true that Stoicism discourses most earnestly of responsibility and of duty. But since it cannot extract a well-founded and living notion of active endeavour either from nature-philosophy or from ethics, it merely presents us, in using such expressions, with beautiful corpses. It is unable really to offer us anything whatever

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which implies and involves the activity of beings possessing free-will and conscious of their aims. The fact continually emerges that thought has been forced along passivist lines. Nature-philosophy yields only the cosmic background for the teaching of resignation at which its ethic arrives. Of the ideal of the fulfilment of the world-purpose by and by means of an ethical and ethically organized humanity—the ideal which inspires Chinese monism—it has never had even a clear view, far less a thorough grasp. It is impressive to trace the decay of the old classical ethic in Epicureanism and Stoicism. In place of the robust ethic of world-affirmation which Socrates looked for as the product of rational reflection, we find resignation as the ideal. An incomprehensible impoverishment of moral ideas is discovered to us. The notion of active endeavour fails utterly to develop. Even those traces of such a notion which exist traditionally in the naïve ideas of ancient Greece are eventually lost.

The ancient Hellene was, indeed, rather a civic unit than a human being. The energetic surrender of his private ends in favour of those of the community is a matter of course to him. Socrates is explicit on this point. In the discourses which are reported by Xenophon in the *Memorabilia* he insists that it is the duty of the individual to become virtuous just in order to be an effective member of the State. In the natural course of development the stream of thought which had its origin in the mind of Socrates ought to have deepened this mentality by a continual presentation of the highest social aims. But Stoicism was not even in the position to preserve its legacy in the same state as it received it. Always its tendency is to lead the individual to withdraw into himself away from the exterior world and all that goes on in it.

By an inevitable development, or rather process, the ethic of Greek thought becomes, in Epicureanism and Stoicism, an ethic of decadence. Incapable of producing

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ideals for the progressive development of societies, it is also unable to be itself in any real sense an ethic of civilization. In place of setting up as an ideal the man whose character has a value for civilization it holds up that of the "wise man". It has, however, a confused vision of an individual culture which consists in a refined and superior detachment from the world of a very thorough nature. No doubt the gospel of resignation which ancient thought, when it had gained some knowledge of life, began to preach to mankind, has something very powerful in it. Resignation is the vestibule through which one passes to the inner rooms of ethics. Epicureanism and Stoicism, however, never get farther than the vestibule. In them resignation takes the place of an ethical view of the world. For this reason they were incapable of leading ancient society from a crude to a refined and developed affirmative attitude regarding life and the world.

The notion of a rational principle productive of happiness, the legacy of Socrates, does not afford us sufficient scope for an explanation of the world which shall account for the data in a really living manner. A system of utilitarianism looking to the whole of society cannot be developed out of this principle, although he did believe that he had found the germ of such a system in it. Ethical thought remains penned in the circle of the individual self. Every attempt at perfecting the rational-hedonistic idea peters out in the same way, the affirmative attitude towards existence resolving itself into one of negation. As a consequence of this tendency of logical thought the old Western civilization came to an end, for after the critical awakening of the Greek spirit it could only have been saved by an optimistic-ethical view of the world based on sound reflection. From its Socratic heritage it was able, it is true, to develop an earnest and profound system of thought, but not to produce any inspiration for a living and progressive civilization.

PLATO'S ABSTRACT ROOT-PRINCIPLE OF MORAL CONDUCT.
THE ETHICS OF WORLD DENIAL

Both Plato (427-347 B.C.) and Aristotle (397-322 B.C.), the two great independent thinkers, were, equally with other schools, incapable of creating an activist ethic, and thus of finding a basis for civilization.

Plato attempts to discover the common notion of right moral conduct, but he forsakes the road indicated, even if not travelled to the end, by Socrates, in order to determine the standard of conduct by induction. He gives up the idea of finding this by reflection about means and ends and by observation of actual practice, that is by a study of the content of the thing itself. He prefers to define its nature, by a purely formal process of logically intelligible thought.

In order to formulate an ethic he makes a detour through the doctrine of Platonic *ideas*. All homogeneous phenomena are only to be understood as being so in virtue of the fact that they are changing reflections of an original pattern, and for this he uses the expression "idea". In all trees we see a reflection of the tree-idea, in all horses of the horse-idea. We have not, however, as we are inclined to think, got hold of the idea itself when we have abstracted from observation of trees or of horses the general notion of a tree or a horse. The ideas themselves are inherent in our minds. They do not originate from our experience of the empirical world, but from the recollection of the pure supra-sensuous world of ideas, a recollection which our souls bring with them when they enter on incarnation. In the same way exactly we have come by our notion of goodness.

Thus Plato strives to found his ethics on a theory regarding the nature of our knowledge of the sensuous world; and he embodies it in a tortuous doctrine, involved in fantasy and vagueness in every direction. Encouraged by his first essay, he ventures further to declare that the idea of the beautiful, so intimately bound up with that of the good, similarly exists ready made in our minds, and is not, any more than its companion, the product of reflection on experience.

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Plato, however, is the first of all thinkers to feel the presence of a moral ideal in man as what it really is—something awful and inscrutable. This is, in fact, his great contribution. And thus he is not content with the attempt of the historical Socrates to equate the good with the principle of rational hedonism. He is quite clear that it must be something unconditioned, self-compelling. To establish this characteristic of moral goodness seems to him, as later to Kant, to be the great task of thought.

What results from this method of approach? A fundamental ethical principle, indeed, but one devoid of content. In order to maintain its superiority, they make it the child of abstract refinements, born in the country of the supersensuous. And so it is never at home among actual conditions, and can never influence them. Rules for concrete ethical action cannot be developed from it. Thus Plato, wherever he deals with practical ethics, is obliged to confine himself to treatment of the principal popular virtues. In the *Republic* he names four of these: wisdom, manliness, self-control and justice. He bases these not on his general notion of the good, but on his psychology.

But Plato's real ethic has nothing whatever to do with such virtues. If the notion of the good is supra-mundane, and the immaterial world is the only real one, then only those thoughts and actions which have reference to the immaterial possess ethical character. In the universe of appearance there is nothing of real value for us to exploit. We are only enslaved and powerless spectators of a shadow play. All our efforts must be directed to cutting ourselves loose from the phenomenal and getting a view of the real events which are taking place in the light of day. True ethics consists in denial of the world. Plato lapses to this position at the moment when he declares that the home of the ethical is in the world of pure existence. He gives expression to thoughts of ascetic negation side by side with the Greek feeling for activism. What is perplexing in him is that he does not recognize that these are conflicting tendencies, but what he says has sometimes one import,

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sometimes the other. His ethic is a chaos, he himself a virtuoso of inconsequences. The ethic of negation which Plato preaches does not originate in his own mind, but he takes it over from others in the Indian form in which Orphism and Pythagoreanism offer it to him. This is a pessimism which has been thought out into a system and knit up closely with the doctrine of metempsychosis. How such a system gained a footing in Greek thought we do not know, and shall never discover. The existence in Greek thought of crude optimism and refined pessimism side by side will always remain the great problem of Greek civilization. But if pessimism had not been already present it would inevitably have been evolved by Plato. The great abstract ground-principle of the moral, which he sets up in order to secure the absolute nature of morality, which was recognized by him, for the first time in history, as a necessity, allows no possible content but the negation of the world of sense and of the life of nature.

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The contemplation of Plato's fate shook Aristotle badly. He shrank from any attempt to mount up into the clouds in which the other had lost his way. Let us see, then, how he fares. He aims at the construction of a pragmatically useful ethic related to actual existence in a comprehensive and effective manner. The result of his labours lies before us in the so-called *Nicomachean Ethics*, the closely packed treatise composed for his son Nicomachus. He adopts the general idea put forth by Socrates, that ethics is the pursuit of happiness. At the same time, he himself is clear that the idea of active effectiveness must play a much greater rôle in ethics than it does either with Plato or with the other post-Socratic thinkers. Aristotle feels that effectiveness is the crux of the question. He wants to save the activist notion, and so he avoids the paths of abstract thought wherein Plato wanders and rejects the

ethic of pleasure and pain with which the Cyrenaics and Cynics busy themselves. The vitality which is found in the primitive philosophers finds expression again in his ethical thought. He sketches in bold free-hand the pre-suppositions for the carrying out of this undertaking. The root motive of activity he finds in the idea of pleasure. And he is able to do this because his whole philosophy is planned on the comprehension of existence as the *form* of activity, as activity incarnate. Humanity also is in its essence activity. Happiness—true beatitude—is to be defined as virtuous activity. Rational pleasure is the experience of the fulfilment of activity.

At the same time, however, he is quite clear that the idea of activity must play a much greater part in ethics than it does either in Plato or in the other post-Socratic thinkers. Aristotle feels that the idea of effective action is the crux of the whole affair, and he is determined to save it. Therefore he avoids the path of Plato's abstract thought and rejects the ethic of pleasure and pain with which the Cyrenaics and Cynics occupy themselves. The vital energy of the older Greek world is to find expression in his thought. He sets forth in grandiose fashion the preliminaries to the carrying through of his undertaking. The root-motive of activity he finds in the idea of pleasure. This he is able to do because his whole philosophy works out along the line of comprehending existence as active energy expressing itself in form. The very being of man is thus also a phase of the active energy of the universe. Beatitude is to be defined as virtuous activity.

Starting from this *idea* of pleasure which issues as activity, Aristotle is on the way to comprehend ethics as deep and thorough affirmation of life and to tackle the problem of leading the classical world from a crude to an intelligent attitude of affirmation with regard to existence. But on the way he leaves the road. When he has to face the decisive question of what it is that makes action moral, he gives way and turns back. In opposition to Socrates, he denies that ethics is a kind of knowledge which gives a

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content to activity. The content of the will is already given. No reflection and no intellectual perception can either alter it or add anything new to it. Thus ethics does not consist in an orientation of the will through aims which perceptive knowledge holds out before it, but in its own self-regulation. The essential thing is to establish a correct balance between the various elements of the given will-content. Left to itself, the will tends to waste its energies in extremes. Rational reflection keeps it on the correct *via media*. Thus brought into harmony, human activity realizes itself as practically ethical. Virtue, according to this theory, is skill in the exercise of correct moderation, a skill acquired by practice. Instead of constructing an ethical system, Aristotle is more modestly content with a body of teaching concerning virtue. This lowering of the ethical pitch is the price which he pays for the possession of an ethic which does not run off either into abstractions or into resignation.

Whilst he gives up the problem of discovering the fundamental principle of morality, he is yet able to set up an ethic of activism. This, however, contains no living forces, but merely dead ones. Aristotle's ethic is thus an æsthetic system of will-impulses. It consists in the enumeration of virtues and in demonstrating that these are to be comprehended as a *via media*. Courage, for example, lies half-way between rashness and cowardice; temperance between over-indulgence and mere dull lack of desire; truthfulness between boastful exaggeration and timid under-statement; generosity between wasteful extravagance and miserly close-fistedness; magnanimity between arrogance and self-depreciation; gentleness between being too conciliatory and not sufficiently so.

During this tour through the ethical realm many interesting prospects meet the traveller's eyes. In his close and vivid argument Aristotle leads his reader to consider the questions affecting the relation of the individual to his fellow-individuals and to the community. How much of

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good and true there is in the chapter about honour and in that about friendship, what wrestling with the problem of justice !

No one can escape the fascination of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Here a noble and ripened personality shares his experience with us in a manner at once grand and simple. But the method of treatment he develops is as worthless in itself as it is fruitful from the point of view of technique and method. The moral comes into direct contact with the actual without having previously sought to gain a clear conception of its own nature. Aristotle imagines that it will find this latter in the very course of its contact with the actual. But in this he is mistaken. He allows himself to be led astray by having observed that some virtues—and even these really only in a more or less forced manner—can be comprehended as the correct mean between two extremes, and is thus led away into developing his whole ethical system according to this scheme.

But a more or less natural quality which is a virtue by customary usage is one thing ; a virtue in the real ethical sense of the word is something quite different. The mean between extravagance and miserliness is not the ethical virtue of generosity, but the quality of rational frugality. The mean between rashness and cowardice is not the ethical virtue of courage, but the quality of rational prudence. From a combination of two qualities we can never get anything but another quality. Virtue, however, in the ethical sense, consists in this, that the quality has reference to an ideal of self-fulfilment and is the servant of some aim which involves general principles. Generosity as an ethical virtue is a disposition to give out and to enrich others, a disposition which subserves some one of the aims recognized by the personality in question as of universal worth and value ; and it subserves these aims in such a fashion that the natural root tendency found in extravagance plays no rôle whatever in the action, and that of miserliness is altogether out of court. Courage is the risking of my existence for an end recognized by me as of universal

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value. In such actions the natural root tendency present in foolhardiness has no part, and that of timidity exerts no influence at all.

The giving away of possessions or of life for an end of universal value is ethical in all circumstances, whilst extravagance and miserliness, recklessness and cowardice, as simple dispositions, unmotived by a higher aim, never have an ethical, but always merely a purely natural, character. Whether the giving away of possessions or of life for the sake of an aim of universal worth takes place in excessive measure or only in exactly the degree necessary for attainment of this aim has nothing whatever to do with the ethical character of such willing and action. In either case their ethical character remains unaffected. Such excess or moderation merely expresses the extent to which the ethical will is, or is not, guided by thoughtful prudence, acting in conjunction and simultaneously with it. Thus Aristotle's presentation of the ethical life rests on his confusion of the denotation of the term "virtue" in every-day speech and the meaning of the same term in its exact ethical sense. He smuggles in the genuinely ethical, and then explains it as the result of two extremes of natural disposition or temperament.

In the chapter about moderation—in the third book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*—he himself is obliged to admit that it is impossible to carry through the theory of the ethical as the mean between two extremes. The pleasure which we take in beauty, he there demonstrates, remains in its ever-increasing power exactly the same in essence as it was before. To speak of excess is out of the question. He drops this admission by the way, without noticing, as it seems, that in doing so he jeopardizes his vague definition of the ethical as the mean in each particular case and recognizes with Socrates and Plato the being of a Good existing in and for itself with reference to its own content.

Aristotle is so firmly resolved not to let himself be drawn into discussing the problem of the root-nature of morality

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that nothing will overcome his reluctance to enter on such an investigation. He plans to coast by the shore, keeping to empirical data and treating ethics as purely a natural science. Only he forgets that in natural science we can confine ourselves to constructing from given phenomena hypotheses about the nature of the primal existence underlying these, but that, on the contrary, in ethics we have to establish a root-principle from which phenomena may be developed.

Progress in ethical theory is impossible for Aristotle, because he fails to grasp the true nature of morality. Plato goes one better than Socrates and then loses himself in abstractions. Aristotle, in his effort to keep in touch with the actual, never even reaches the Socratic level. He assembles materials for a monumental edifice and then puts together a mere log shanty. He is one of the greatest of those who treat of the virtues dogmatically; but the very least of those who dare to search for the fundamental principle of morality is greater than he. Dogmatic treatment of the virtues is just as little ethics as gristle is bone. But how striking is the fact that the fundamental principle of moral action, which Socrates regarded as an intrinsically involved and certain product of thoughtful reflection about the ethical, is never definitely established! Why do all the thinkers of antiquity who, in the wake of Socrates, join in the search for such a principle, always go astray? Why does Aristotle give up absolutely any attempt at such an investigation and condemn himself in so doing to a mere dogmatic treatment of the virtues, in which, as a matter of fact, there is scarcely more ethical life and power than in the abstract ethics of Plato and the resignation-doctrine of the others?

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How little Aristotle and Plato are capable respectively of realizing an activist ethic is shown by the way in which they tackle the ideal of the civilized State. Plato develops

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his in the *Republic* (*ἡ πολίτεια*), Aristotle in the *Politics* (Teaching about the State). At the very same time Mencius was composing a treatise on the civilized State for the Chinese princes. Both are clear that the State must be something more than a mere assemblage which consists only of a considerable number of human beings drawn together by purely natural causes and governed in a thoroughly efficient manner. They all agree in their demand that such a State should secure the true happiness of its citizens. But without virtue this is neither thinkable nor realizable. Therefore the State must be developed in an ethical form. "Honourable and virtuous actions are the end of the political community", as Aristotle has it.

The historically objective State is thus to be developed from the political community under the influence of an ethico-rational idea. In the *Republic* Plato makes Socrates declare that "so long as neither do philosophers govern as kings in the State nor do the now so-called kings and rulers strive in a genuine and comprehensive manner to attain wisdom, so long will both political power and the search for wisdom equally come to nothing; . . . so long will there be no freedom from evil for the State, indeed, as I think, none even for the human race". But when they come to develop the ideal of the civilized State, Plato and Aristotle show a striking peculiarity. What they immediately picture to themselves as the State of the future is not a commonwealth comprehending a whole people, but always the same Greek city-state efficiently reformed. That they conceive their ideal on such a contracted scale is historically comprehensible, but deplorable from the point of view of the development of the philosophic idea of the civilized State. A result of this same contracted scale is that both thinkers are anxiously concerned that the city-republic should not be endangered by an increase of population. The number of inhabitants is to be kept, as far as possible, at the same figure. Aristotle does not reject proposals to

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let weakly children die of hunger and to artificially destroy infants before birth.

The fact that the Spartan state, in opposition to this policy, views an increase of population as desirable, and leaves its citizen tax-free as soon as he has four children, seems to him irrational. Just as both thinkers are unable to work up to the universal idea of the national State, so also with regard to the general conception of humanity. They make a sharp distinction between the slave and the labourer on one side and the free citizen on the other. The former they regard merely as working animals who are destined to maintain the material well-being of the State. But as human creatures the fate of these classes scarcely interests them at all. Such beings are allowed no part, it seems, in the life of active perfection to be attained by means of the civilized State. Here and there amongst the sophists slavery was indeed attacked, not, however, on humanitarian grounds, but for the pleasure of throwing doubt on the justification for existing institutions. Aristotle defends it as a natural arrangement, but recommends mild treatment of slaves. Labourers and all who earn their living by manual toil are debarred from citizenship. "One who leads the life of a manual worker or a wage-earner cannot practise virtue", says Aristotle. That work as such can have any ethical value is an idea foreign to his thought, in spite of his definition of happiness as *virtuous activity*. Both he and Plato are still completely possessed by the ancient view that only the "free man" can have full scope and value as a human being.

In the details of their ideal States the two disagree. Aristotle argues against Plato. Unfortunately, the political sections with which he constructs his model of the ideal State are not fully known to us. The chief difference between his and the Platonic State is that Aristotle keeps more closely to actual historical data. He builds up his State on the basis of the family. Plato, on the contrary, sets the State over against the family. In Plato's *Republic* the free citizens hold goods, wives and children alike in

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common possession. They are to possess nothing of their own as individuals, so that they may not be withheld by private interests from giving their energies to the service of the common weal. Beside this, he makes the breeding of men a duty of the State. He limits strictly the relations of men and women, and only permits such unions as are likely to produce offspring distinguished both bodily and mentally. The results of unauthorized weddings are to be destroyed before birth or starved to death subsequently.

Aristotle is content to guarantee the quality of the offspring by legal enactments regarding the age of marriage. Men are not to be married until they are thirty-seven years old. In addition, marriage is to take place in winter, and by preference when the wind is in the north.

What, then, is the nature of the good which is to be actualized in this civilized State? The only reply which Aristotle and Plato have to give to this decisive question is that such a State makes it possible for a number of its members, namely the free citizens, to live for their own physical and mental development without being troubled by material cares, and to conduct public affairs. Such a free citizen is not called upon for any ethical service in the deeper sense or expected to represent any large-hearted standard of progress. Nowhere do the characteristic limits of ancient ethics reveal themselves so distinctly as in the short-sighted nature of their ideal of the State. It falls far short of giving an ethical value to humanity as such. Thus the State has as its aim, not the perfection of all, but only that of a certain class.

The nation is not yet recognized as a natural and ethical magnitude. For this reason the political union of the different civic communities for the performance of higher tasks common to all is not thought of as a possibility. Each remains an unconnected entity. Plato thinks that he has taken the common relationship sufficiently into account when he demands that in the internal wars of Hellas houses shall not be destroyed and plantations shall not be

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laid waste, as was the usage during war with external barbarians.

The idea of humanity as such has not yet appeared in thought, and therefore it is impossible for Plato and Aristotle to conceive of their State as working together in community with others for the general progress of the human race. They accordingly found their civilized State on a concept of what a State is which is itself cramped and confined in every direction by narrow horizons ; and, besides, the political community which they take as a type of the State was already a dying body in the period in which they were writing. Even whilst Aristotle was composing his *Politics* his own pupil, Alexander the Great, was founding a world empire, and at the very same time Rome was beginning her conquest of Italy.

Heavier in the scale against them than all the external defects of their ideal of the civilized State is the fact that both thinkers are alike incapable of infusing into the community the energies necessary for its maintenance as such. The idea of such a State is only really present with the required vital force when the individual is compelled by the impulse contained in his ethical view of the world to give himself energetically and enthusiastically to the service of the organized community. In short, there can be no real civilized State without civic idealism. But Plato and Aristotle cannot assume anything of this sort in the case of the members of their States because they are already committed to the ideal of the sage who skilfully and prudently withdraws himself from the world. Plato admits this deliberately. His philosophers who are detailed to govern the State give themselves to her service only when the rota brings their turn round ; they are glad when they are discharged from their duties and can again busy themselves, as wise men among the wise, with the world of pure abstract existence.

Aristotle, when in the *Politics* he poses the question whether the contemplative life is to be preferred to political activity or not, decides theoretically in favour of the latter.

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“Unjustly do men”, he says, “prize inaction above action, for happiness consists in action” (*Pol.* iv. 2). But there is nothing in the doctrine of virtues contained in the *Nicomachean Ethics* which would lead the individual to dedicate his life to the service of the common weal. It is true that Plato and Aristotle still hold the ancient conviction that it is the individual’s duty to sacrifice himself for the State; but they cannot establish this as a principle with their own view of the world as a foundation.

Like Epicurus and the Stoic school, they are in the grip of an ethic in which no will to reform the world has any place. How much greater than the two Greeks in this thought-out concept of the ideal State is Mong-tzü (Mencius)! He is able to build it up on large lines and to claim that men should give their best thought to its service, because he naturally and simply gives himself up to that same service as a result of his magnanimous view of the world, a view infused and informed by the idea of ethical activity. Plato and Aristotle, lacking such a world-view, are thrown back on conjecture and invention for the root principle of their ideal State. Plato’s *Republic* is a curiosity in political literature. Aristotle’s *Politics* is of value, not because of its obsolete theory of the civilized State, but only because of the nobly planned and pertinent arguments about the advantages and disadvantages of various concepts of the State and about economic problems.

And so the decadence of antiquity begins even before the point where the world empire oppresses the individual and arrests the normal exchange relations between individual and community. It sets in already with Socrates, since the ethical thought which proceeds from him cannot really lift the individual out of himself and place him in relation with the community as an active force to work for the ethicizing and perfecting of communal relations.

There is, in fact, no mean between the ethic of enthusiasm and that of resignation. The ethic of resignation, however, is unable to evolve any real relations tending to the progress

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of civilization, and consequently becomes sterile and uncreative.

* * *

“Under the Empire Stoicism shrivels up into a moralizing popular philosophy”; so we are usually told in books on ancient philosophy. Actually, however, there is no question of shrivelling up; rather do we find a profound struggle to attain to a living ethic, a struggle which sets in unexpectedly in the eventide of Greco-Roman thought and leads to a nature-philosophy characterized by an optimistic-ethical tone.

The mainstays of this movement are L. Annæus Seneca (4 B.C. to A.D. 65), Nero's tutor, who, denounced by his own pupils, was forced to commit suicide; the Phrygian slave Epictetus (born c. A.D. 50), who in A.D. 94 was sent away from Rome in a general expulsion of philosophical teachers; the emperor Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 121–180), who, educated by pupils of Epictetus, defended the Empire in desperate times and wrote down his philosophic introspections whilst in camp during the course of his campaigns.¹

In its classical period the Greek ethics moves in various circles of ideas—sometimes among egoistic considerations of utility, sometimes amid frigid teaching about the virtues, sometimes, again, in ascetic denial of the world, sometimes in pure resignation. But, whatever direction it takes, it never leads men really away from themselves. With Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius, however, it loses this egoistic character. Belying the spirit of the ancient world, it develops itself into an ethic of general love of

¹ We possess a whole series of ethical treatises from the pen of Seneca, amongst which we may name *Of Mercy* (*De Clem.*, dedicated to the Emperor Nero); *Of Good Deeds* (*De Benef.*); *Of Spiritual Tranquillity* (*De Tran. An.*); *Of Anger* (*De Ira*).

For our knowledge of the teaching of Epictetus we are indebted to his pupil the historian Flavius Arrianus, who has recorded his master's discourses in eight books, of which four are extant. He also published some of Epictetus' sayings as a little handbook of morals (*Encbrisidion*). In addition, we find a vital ethic already striving for expression in the popular philosophy of Cicero (106–43 B.C.).

humanity: It occupies itself with the direct self-sacrificing relation of one man to another.

Whence this sympathy for human nature which classical antiquity lacks? The older Greek ethicists are busied with the State. Their interest is taken up in maintaining the organization of the community as it is embodied in the city republic, so that the free citizens may develop their free existence. The type of the perfect man is to realize itself. Around him revolve human beings who are only thought of as mere things necessary to subserve this aim.

But in the course of the mighty political and social convulsions which lead to the formation of a world empire this mentality ceased to be a matter of course. Amidst these fearful experiences perception became humanized. The horizons of ethical science broadened. The city republic in whose service ethics had come into being no longer existed. A world empire oppressed and crushed all men everywhere in the same way, and thus the individual as such became the object of reflection and of ethics. The conception of the universal fraternity of humanity comes into being. A disposition towards humanitarianism finds voice. Seneca speaks out against the gladiatorial shows. Yet more: the relationship between men and the lower animals is recognized. And now, when it has caught sight of humanity and of the individual as such, ethics reaches the depth and attains the scope which enable it to grasp after a comprehension of the great universal will which lies behind the world we know. And now also nature-philosophy and ethics can really begin to develop a relationship. Such a relationship had, indeed, been a dream of Stoicism from the beginning, but a dream which it had never been able to realize because it had not previously set foot within the territory of the living and universal ethic essential to such a relation.

There is, however, yet another reason for the fact that optimism and ethics are now able to make themselves felt in a nature-philosophy. The old Stoicism was forced into a philosophy of simple, unqualified resignation just in so

far as it yielded to the necessity for critical thought. But as time went on the practical and religious instincts which had always been present in its view of the world began to gather force. The ancient world, as it comes to an end, is no longer critical, but either sceptical or religious ; and therefore the later Stoicism is more able to let itself be guided by the ethical needs of its view of the world than it was in its earlier form. It becomes at the same time both deeper and more simple than it was at the beginning. Like Chinese monotheism, it rises to the unprejudiced standpoint from which it can attribute an ethical significance to the world-will. Now appear Stoics who, like Kung-tzu, like Mong-tzu (Mencius), like Chüang-tzu (Chwang-tse), indeed, like the rationalists of the eighteenth century later on, recognize the ethical element as something inherent in both the universe and the individual human being. They are unable to demonstrate this view of the world any better than did Zeno and his pupils, who also gave in their allegiance to it ; but they express it with an inner conviction which the latter had not at their command, and they act with an enthusiasm denied to the originators of their movement.

If the later Stoicism comes to the point of elevating the world-principle more and more into the position of a personal ethical God, it follows, in so doing, laws which also work themselves out in Hinduism. But the world-view of resignation, though it was overcome by the earlier Stoics, was never fully disabled by them. In Seneca and Epictetus it maintains itself very strongly side by side with the ethical conception of the universe. Only in Marcus Aurelius do the optimistic impulses sound a full note of victory. From now on Stoicism has become a multiform elementary philosophy ; and the reason why the later Stoicism is so rich and so living is just because it dares to be such a philosophy in such a far-reaching and comprehensive manner.

ETHICAL SAYINGS OF SENECA, EPICTETUS AND
MARCUS AURELIUS

Ethical Sayings of Seneca

No human being is nobler than another, for that would mean that his spiritual essence was better constituted and capable of nobler knowledge. The world is the one mother of us all. The first origin of every individual can be traced back alike to her, be it through a genealogy of the most noble and famous or through a descent of the meanest quality. Virtue is attainable by all, open to all; it is accessible to all, invites all: free-born, freedmen, slaves, kings and exiles. Virtue does not regard blue blood or wealth. For virtue the man alone suffices (*De Ben.* III. 18). Men err when they suppose that the state of slavery includes the whole of mankind; the nobler part of men are unaffected by it (*De Ben.* III. 20). Even if he has nothing else to recommend him, yet because he bears the name of man every human being has my goodwill (*De Clem.* I.).

With regard to a slave one must think, not how much one may do to him without being punished, but how much the nature of justice and fairness allows, for these command us to treat even prisoners and purchased servants with mercy. . . . Although everything be allowable against a slave, there are yet things which, by the common right of every living being, are declared not allowable against a human person, because he is of the same nature as thyself (*De Clem.* 18).

For this is the demand made on a man as such: that, where possible, he should be of use to many men; if this is not possible, to a few; should this be impossible, to his neighbour; only if this last is impossible, to himself (*De Otio.* 30).

Through tireless goodwill one wins over evil men, and there is no disposition so obstinate and inimically disposed to that which is worthy of love, . . . that it will not love the good to whom it is always indebted for some new benefit. No thanks are due to me. What is it my duty

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to do ? What the gods do, who benefit us before we acknowledge it, and go on doing so without receiving any thanks.

Ethical Sayings of Epictetus

Nature is wonderful and full of love to her creatures (*Fragm.*). Ye men, wait upon God. If He calls you and frees you from service, then go to Him ; but for the present remain quietly in the position where He has placed you (*Discourses*, I. 9).

Thou carriest God about with thee and knowest it not, O thou unblest one ! Thou hast Him in thyself and markest it not if thou smirchest Him with unclean thoughts or filthy deeds (*Discourses*, II. 8).

Have the will to please thyself and to stand clear before God ; strive to be pure, one with thyself and one with God (*Discourses*, II. 18).

Hold thy peace in general ; speak only what is needful, and that briefly. Before all, say nothing about thy fellow-men, be it by way of blame, or of praise, or of comparison. Do not swear at all, if possible, or at least as seldom as possible. Satisfy the needs of the body, eating, drinking, clothing, shelter, menial service, in as simple a fashion as you can. Avoid making ribald jests, for you are then in danger of becoming vulgar, and thereby losing the respect of your fellow-men (*Handbook*, 33).

If in walking you take care not to tread on a nail or to misplace your foot, then take care also that you take no harm in your soul (*Handbook*, 38).

Ethical Sayings of Marcus Aurelius

All that happens, happens justly. If you carefully observe everything, you will recognize this ; I do not say according to the order of nature, but rather according to justice, and as proceeding from a Being who orders everything fitly and worthily (I.).

If I exert myself, it is for the sake of the welfare of humanity. If anything happens to me, I take it and strive

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AURELIUS

to relate it to the gods and the Great Source of all, from whom all events, bound closely together, flow forth to us (VII., p. 23).

He who commits injustice is godless, for the great All-Nature has created rational beings for one another, that they may help each in need, but not that they may harm each other (IX., p. 1).

Love humanity ; follow the Divine (VII., p. 31).

If you do not want to get up in the mornings, then think, 'I awake to live the active life of a man' (V., p. 1).

Seek your whole joy and contentment in this : to move from one act of common usefulness to another, always mindful of God (VI. 7).

The best way of revenging myself is, not to requite evil with evil (VI. 6).

It is a merit in man to love those who wrong us. We may attain thereto if we reflect that other men are one kin with us, that they fail from ignorance and against their will, and that both of us will soon be dead (VII. 28).

The good is necessarily the useful, and therefore the good and noble man must concern himself therewith (VIII., p. 10).

No one becomes weary of seeking his own profit. Profit thus secures us a natural activity. Do not become weary of seeking thy own profit, so that thou mayest be profitable to others (VII., p. 74).

The irrational animals, and in general all sensible beings who do not possess reason, act magnanimously and nobly, like a rational man. Men, however, because they have reason, act with comrade-like love (VII., p. 23).

Thou hast existed hitherto as a part of the whole, and wilt again return to thy Originator, or rather thou wilt come again as a new life-germ by a transformation.

Many grains of incense are destined for the same altar. Some fall into the fire sooner, others later ; but this makes no difference (I., p. 45).

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In the ethically-optimistic world-view the later Stoics find the impulse to action which was lacking in the ancient ethics of the classical period. Marcus Aurelius is an enthusiastic utilitarian, like the rationalists of the eighteenth century, because he, like them, is convinced that nature herself has created an indissoluble connection between morality and those tendencies which are beneficial both to the individual and to the community. Under these circumstances it was inevitable that the old question of classical ethics, whether the thinking man ought or ought not to busy himself with public affairs, should again become an issue. Epicurus had taught, "The wise man keeps away from the business of the State, unless very special circumstances prevail". Zeno decided, "He will take part in State affairs if no obstacles to that course arise". Both schools allow him to retire into himself at his own pleasure; only the one sets the presuppositions which are to lead to this severance somewhat earlier, the other somewhat later, in the march of events. The thought of an attitude of altruistic self-sacrifice for the community, an attitude to be maintained in all circumstances, is entirely foreign to their universe of ethical ideas.

With the later Stoics it comes into view because they have caught sight themselves of the idea of humanity. "Man," says Seneca in his treatise on the wise man's leisure (*De Otio*), "belongs to two republics". The one is vast and common to all, reaches as far as the sun shines, and comprehends gods and men; the other is that into which we are taken as citizens by the accident of our birth. Circumstances may, indeed, prevent the wise man from dedicating himself to the community, and oblige him "to flee before the storm into a safe haven". It may happen—Seneca is thinking here of his own epoch—that none of the recognized States are willing to make use of the wise man's activities. But in that case he does not retire altogether within himself, but he enters the service of the great republic by amending the views of men in general and working for the coming of a new era.

THE OPTIMISTIC-ETHICAL WORLD-VIEW OF THE LATER STOICISM AND ITS ULTIMATE FAITH

This deepened and widened concept of duty is also found in Epictetus. In Marcus Aurelius we do not in general find much further notice taken of the impossibility of action in public life. In him speaks the ruler who feels himself the servant of the State. His ideal is the citizen "who goes on from the conferring of one benefit on his fellow-citizens to the gift of another, and undertakes with joy whatever duty the State may lay on him". "Do what is necessary and what reason demands of a being destined by nature to be the member of a political community, and do it in the prescribed way." In the middle of the second century A.D. ancient thought arrives at an optimistic-ethical world-view which contains living ideals for civilization, and thus anticipates that one which was destined in the eighteenth century to bring into being so mighty and so universal a movement of general culture. It comes too late for the men of the Greco-Roman world, nor does it penetrate the masses, but remains the privilege of an *élite*. It could not penetrate the masses, because forces were at work among these with which it could not combine. It is true that the ethics of later Stoicism stand so close to the Christian ethic of the universal love of humanity that later tradition makes Seneca out a Christian, and the Church father Augustine holds up the life of the heathen emperor Marcus Aurelius as a model for Christians. But the two movements cannot pass over into one another, but inevitably clash. The gruesome persecutions of Christians took place under the noble Marcus Aurelius. The Christianity of his day proclaimed a battle to the death with Stoicism. Why was this their destiny? The answer is that Christianity is dualist and pessimistic, the ethic of the later Stoics, on the contrary, monist and optimistic. Christianity gives up the natural world as wicked; the later Stoics idealize it. It makes no difference that the ethic sounds almost identical in tone. It arises as the result of two mutually irreconcilable views of the world. All antitheses within the world are capable of synthesis and solution; an antithesis of

world-view alone is insoluble. The conflict ended with the destruction of the optimistic-ethical world-view of the Stoics, which was defended by officers without an army to command. The attempt made in the evening of the Greco-Roman civilization to restore the Empire and transform it into an empire of humanity, failed.

The horizons of the ancient philosophy had remained stationary too long. Ethical thinkers who might have been able to lead the old world at the right moment to an ethical activist optimism, had not arisen to help her. Fateful also was the fact that the natural sciences, which had begun so promisingly, by unlucky accident and because philosophy wandered away from them, came to a standstill before men discovered purposive law in the working of natural forces, and thereon gained power over them. Thus the self-consciousness which keeps alive for the modern—even in the darkest hours of history—a belief in progress, even if it be only a progress in external forms, was altogether lacking to the ancients. This psychological factor is of great importance.

It is true that the ability in art which is to us so striking a feature of the Greek spirit, is itself a power over material things. But this creative ability was unable to raise man to a higher affirmation of life and to faith in progress. It only helped him to get a clear view of himself by means of literature and art as a being involved in the antagonism between crude affirmation of the world and of life and intellectual denial of these. It is, in fact, just this enigmatical confusion of gaiety and gloom which forms the tragic glamour of Greek art.

In this way a strong ethical affirmation of the world and of life is made difficult in every direction for the ancient world. Therefore it lapses ever more and more into pessimistic views of the world which draw thought away from actuality and extol in a series of cosmic dramas the freeing of the spiritual from imprisonment in the material. Oriental and Christian Gnosticism, Neo-Pythagoreanism, already beginning to appear in the first century B.C.,

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Neo-Platonism, originating with Plotinus (A.D. 204-269), and the great mystery cults, meet the religious, world-fugitive temper of the majority of people in the evening of antiquity and offer them that salvation from the world which they are searching for. In this confused medley Christianity wins because it is the most robust of the religions of salvation, possesses the strongest organization as a community, and with the general pessimistic world-view has also living ethical ideas at its disposal.

The optimistic-ethical monism of the later Stoics is like a ray of sunshine which breaks through in the evening of the long, gloomy day of Greco-Roman antiquity whilst the darkness of the Middle Ages is already impending. It cannot wake to life another civilization. The time is past for that. Because it could not attain to an ethical nature-philosophy, the spirit of antiquity lapsed into a pessimistic dualism in which only an ethic of purification, but no ethic of action, is still possible. The thought of Seneca, of Epictetus, of Marcus Aurelius, is the winter seed for the succeeding civilization.

CHAPTER VI

OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF THE WORLD AND ETHICS IN THE RENAISSANCE AND POST-RENAISSANCE

The faith in progress which came from the new discoveries and its accompanying ethic. Christian and Stoic elements in the modern ethic

THE essence of the modern era consists in this: that it thinks and acts in the spirit of an affirmative attitude to life and the world not apparent in equal strength during previous ages. This attitude comes to light in the Renaissance from the end of the fourteenth century onwards. It appears as a revolt against the slavish spirit of the Middle Ages.

Greek philosophy, which became known in Italy in its native dress about the middle of the fifteenth century, through Greek scholars who fled there at that time from Constantinople, helped the movement on to victory. It began to dawn on the thinking men of the period that philosophy must be something more elemental and vital than anything taught by scholasticism. The thought of the ancient world, however, would not have been able to sustain in its own strength the new attitude of affirmation which called on it for help. It does not really possess this mentality at all. Another kind of fuel kept the fire burning. The men of the time, fleeing from book-learning to nature, discovered the objective world. As voyagers they reached undreamed-of lands and measured the greatness of the earth. As investigators they pressed on to infinity and to the secrets of the universe, and discovered that powers controlled by regular laws rule in this universe, and that man can harness these for his own service. The knowledge and power attained by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Copernicus (1473-1543), Kepler (1571-1630),

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Galileo (1564-1642) and others became decisive for the general view of the world held at the time. As a movement nourished purely by intellectual forces the blossoming period of the Renaissance passed relatively quickly, and left little fruit behind. With Paracelsus (end of 15th cent.), Bernardino Telesio (1508-1588), Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) and others an enthusiastic nature-philosophy finds voice. But it never attains its full development. The Renaissance lacked the power to produce an affirmative philosophy which should correspond to its own spirit. For a while its thought dashes here and there, like a storm-tossed sea, against the negative philosophy of the Church. Then all becomes quiet again. The real definitive philosophy of the modern epoch comes into being almost without relation to the Renaissance. It has its roots, not in nature-philosophy, but in the epistemological problem propounded by Descartes, and, starting from this position, is obliged once more to search painfully for the path to nature-philosophy. The affirmative view of life did not establish itself in the modern era by getting itself developed into a well-thought-out view of the world during the course of the Renaissance. If it was able to maintain itself until the eighteenth century—when it came into its kingdom—against the negative view of the world which originated in mediæval thought and in Christianity, this is only due to the circumstance that discoveries of knowledge and power kept on accumulating. In these the new mentality has a support which, far from giving way, grows constantly firmer. Since scientific knowledge can be neither checked nor suppressed, faith in the power of truth grows strong. As it becomes constantly clearer that in nature everything proceeds in accordance with a system of purposive law, confidence is established that the circumstances of society and humanity are susceptible of a similar purposive organization. Since man continually attains greater power over nature, it becomes more and more self-evident to him that the attainment of perfection in

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others as well is only a question of a sufficiently strong will and of a correct approach.

Under the constantly working influence of the new mentality, Christianity changes its attitude to life. It becomes thoroughly leavened with the affirmative view of the world. More and more it begins to be reckoned as self-evident that the spirit of Jesus is not destined to abandon the world, but to transform it. The unchristian and Augustinian-mediæval idea of the kingdom of God—an idea born of pessimism—loses its influence, and in its place comes one which springs from modern optimism. This new orientation of the Christian world-view, which grows to maturity by a slow and frequently interrupted process from the fifteenth to the end of the eighteenth century, is the decisive spiritual event of modern times. In this process Christianity took no account of its own previous history. It believed that it had always remained the same, whereas it had really given up its original essence in the course of this transition from pessimism to optimism.

The modern man is thus optimistic, not because he has come to understand the world in an affirmative sense as a result of deep reflection, but because, through knowledge following power, he has become to some extent its master. This exaltation of self-consciousness, and the enhancement of will-power and of hope which accompany it, determine his will-to-live in an avowedly positive sense. The naturally affirmative attitude inherent in the mind of man could not take the form of an affirmative world-view in antiquity because deep thinking about the world and life impressed on it the attitude of resignation as a necessity of thought. In the modern man a mentality based on knowledge and power combines itself with his inherent affirmative attitude and establishes an optimistic world-view without exciting deep thinking about life and the world.

No great thinker created the spirit of the modern era. It gains its position gradually, founded on the persistently

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recurrent successes of knowledge and power. So it is not accidental that an almost unphilosophic and, in addition, somewhat freakish personality like Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam (1561-1628), produced the programme of the modern world-view. He finds it on the sentence, "Knowledge is power". The picture of the future is developed in his *New Atlantis*, in which he describes how the inhabitants of an island, by the practical application of all the knowledge and power they have won, and through rational reflection regarding the purposive organization of the community, succeed in leading an externally happy life.¹

* * *

How is this ethic related to the mentality characterized by faith in progress, and how is it influenced by this mentality? When ancient ethical thought attempted to think out clearly what was implied in itself, it lapsed into resignation because it tried to define the moral element as that which is both rationally useful and productive of pleasure to the individual. It remained shut up in an egoistic circle and did not get as far as social utilitarianism. Modern ethics has been preserved from such a fate from the beginning. It does not need to develop out of itself the thought that the ethical is action directed to the well-being of others. This thought it finds ready-made and already recognized as axiomatic. It is the gift of Christianity. The thought of Jesus, that the ethical is active self-sacrifice for the sake of others, has won its way through. The ethic which now stands clear and independent of religion has received from its passage through Christianity an avowedly activist and altruist tinge of thought. All that remains is for it to find a rational foundation for this

¹ Bacon was Chancellor to James I. of England, but was deprived of his office in 1621 for accepting bribes. His two chief works are the *Novum Organon Scientiarum* (1620) and the *De dignitate et augmentis Scientiarum* (1623). Only a fragment of the *Nova Atlantis* remains.

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possession. It is extraordinarily significant that in the later Stoicism it encounters a philosophy in which thoughts which have much in common with Christian morality are presented as the outcome of rational reflection. The seed which Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius had sown sprang to life in the modern era. And the reason why Cicero is such a favourite of the moderns is that they find in his writings a noble morality grounded in rational thought. The discovery of the humanitarian ethic of the later Stoicism takes equal rank for the moderns with the discovery of nature. They identify it with the genuine Christian ethic, and contrast it with that of scholasticism, which was modelled on Aristotle. Through the teaching of the later Stoicism the modern era becomes conscious that the moral element is something unmediated and absolute. Since Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius speak in many ways like Jesus, they help to extend the conviction that the true rational ethic corresponds with that of the Gospel. At the close of the Greco-Roman period the later Stoicism and Christianity, in spite of their similarity, had mutually torn each other to pieces. In the modern era they come together to engage mutually in the task of evolving an ethical view of the world. How is it that what was formerly impossible is now possible? Because the abyss which lay between them is now bridged over. Christianity has adopted an attitude of affirmation towards the world and life.

But how has this revolution taken place in Christianity? On the ground of the fact that, in spite of its pessimist world-view, it represents an activist ethic in so far as the relation of man to man comes into consideration. Logically thought out, the pessimist world-view inevitably issues in a passive ethic of world-negation, as is actually the case with the Indians. But the peculiar character of the world-view of Jesus, conditioned as it was by the expectation of the end of the world and the coming of a supernatural kingdom of God, together with the direct nature of His ethical

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consciousness, unite to bring with them the consequence that. He proclaims an ethic of active self-sacrifice on behalf of one's neighbour. This activist ethic is well fitted to help Christianity around the angle of the evolution from a Christian-pessimist to a Christian-optimist world-view. The modern age, following its instinct, takes it as self-evident that the ethic of the active relation of man to man presupposes an ethic which gives a real value to action in itself, and that this activist ethic is again bound up with an optimistic view of the world, which desires and hopes for a complete transformation of relations in it. Jesus' ethic of active self-sacrifice is thus just that which makes it possible for Christianity, on the advent of the modern spirit, to readapt itself from a pessimist to an optimist world-view. This change expresses itself in the way in which the new concept of Christianity, when it is obliged to come into conflict with the old concept, prefers to call itself "the religion of Jesus" in contradistinction to the "Christianity of the dogmas". Thus it proceeds, still timidly in the case of Erasmus and isolated representatives of the Reformation, but afterwards more boldly, in the direction of an interpretation of the teaching of Jesus corresponding to the spirit of modernity, which comprehends Christianity as a religion of action in and on the world. Historically and actually the moderns are incorrect in this. The world-view of Jesus is pessimist through and through as far as the future of the natural world is concerned. His religion is not a religion of action with a view to the transformation of the world, but a religion of expectation of the end of the world. His ethic has an active character only in so far as it exhorts men to unbounded self-sacrifice for the sake of their fellow-men so as to reach the state of inward perfection necessary for those who would attain to the kingdom of God. An enthusiastic ethic, but one apparently not based on an optimistic world-view—this is the magnificent paradox of the teaching of Jesus.

But it was the privilege of the modern age to pass over this paradox and to attribute to Jesus an optimistic world-

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view corresponding to an ethic of enthusiasm and in harmony with the spirit of later Stoicism and of modernity itself. This error was a necessity if there was to be progress in the spiritual life of Europe. What crises it would necessarily have passed through if it had not been able to set up the new world-view in all simplicity under the authority of the overshadowing personality of Jesus! The error was so natural that it was not seriously attacked until the latter part of the nineteenth century. When, at the beginning of the twentieth century, critical historical inquiry made public the discovery that Jesus, in spite of His activist ethic, thought and acted in the circle of a pessimistic world-view dominated by expectation of the end of the world, it aroused angry antagonism. It was accused of degrading Jesus to the level of a mere visionary, whilst in reality it was only making an end of the unreal modernization of His personality.¹

It is now our destiny to live through the crisis, to be obliged as modern men to think in an atmosphere of affirmation towards the world, and at the same time to let the ethic of Jesus speak to us from a pessimistic world-view. Of this problem which enshrouds our life to-day the beginning of the modern period had no inkling. To the men of those times Jesus and the ethic of the later Stoics were twin authorities for the ethical affirmation of life and the world. What a large part the later Stoic ethic played in the formation of modern ethical thought is shown by Erasmus of Rotterdam (1469–1535), Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592), Pierre Charron (1541–1603), Jean Bodin (1530–1596), and Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) equally, whether their thought have a more Christian or a more free-thinking tone. It is due to the later Stoicism that Erasmus was able to interpret the simple gospel of Jesus which he discovered behind the doctrines of the Church as being at the same time the real content and kernel of all

¹ Cf. my books *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God* (1914, Eng. trans.); *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1911, 3rd ed.,; 1922, Eng. trans.).

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ethical philosophizing. And it was because of their support that Montaigne was prevented in his *Essais* (1580) from lapsing altogether into ethical scepticism. It is thanks to the same source of inspiration that Bodin, in his work *De la république* (1577), sets up an ethical ideal of the State as a counter to Machiavelli's *Il Principe* (1515). Because he draws from this spring, Pierre Charron dares to maintain in his *De la sagesse* (1601) that ethics is superior to revealed religion, and can maintain itself independently in face of the same without sacrificing any of its depth or essential being. Finally, it is because Marcus Aurelius has prepared the way for him that Hugo Grotius, in his famous work *De jure belli et pacis* (1625), can set forth with such certainty the foundations of natural and national law and, in so doing, champion the demands of reason and humanitarianism in the realm of jurisprudence.

Left to itself, the newly riser natural science would have probably been inclined to revive the Epicurean view of the world. Pierre Gassendi (1592–1655) actually attempted to do this.¹ But he failed to carry through his attempt. By means of its indwelling faith in progress the mentality of the moderns rises naively superior to scepticism and a sceptical ethic. The real greatness of Epicurus, namely that, in obedience to a deep instinct of truthfulness, he seeks to think ethically in a nature-philosophy which does not present nature as purposive, this all too ingenious modern prophet is able neither to comprehend himself nor to make clear to his age. That age was, on the whole, not yet ripe for the weighty questions of ultimate reality. Its ability was still of an uncritical type. The typical representative of its spirit is Isaac Newton (1643–1727), who in his investigation of nature is completely empirical, and in his attitude to the world remains naively Christian. The Renaissance and post-Renaissance are secure against the difficulties raised for ethics and for an affirmative view of life by a nature-philosophy working without presuppos-

¹ Gassendi: *De vita, moribus et doctrina Epicuri* (1644) and *Synagma philosophiae Epicuri* (1649).

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sitions. The faith in progress which comes from the conquests of knowledge and power and the joy in action which is bound up with it serve them for a world-view. Through this faith in progress ethics receives a fresh influx of life. The inner relationships between ethics and an affirmative attitude to the world begin to find play. The elementary impulses to action which exist in the Christian ethic are set free. Faith in progress gives them a goal, namely transformation of the conditions of life for society and for humanity.

It was not really profound ethical thinking that was responsible for the progress of the moderns ; it was rather the influence which belief in progress, derived from advances in knowledge and in power, exerted on a living ethic derived from Stoic and Christian sources. Belief in progress pulls the waggon ; ethics at first only needs to run by the side. But as the waggon gets heavier and heavier and the surface ever more clogged and sticky, and as ethics is obliged to put its shoulder to the wheel as well, belief in progress begins to baulk, since it has no real intrinsic power in itself. The waggon begins to run backwards and finally drags belief in progress, and with it ethics as well, down over the precipice.

The task set before philosophy was to think out this affirmative attitude which arose from the enthusiasm produced by the sudden attainment of knowledge and power, into an intrinsically founded attitude based on reflection about the universe and the essential nature of man, and to build up an ethic on this foundation. It failed in both parts of this task.

About the middle of the nineteenth century, when it became clear that we were living only in an affirmative atmosphere springing from confidence in knowledge and power, and not in one resulting from profound thought about life and the world, its fate became sealed. The optimistic-ethical world-view, after it had done so much for the actualizing of civilization, fell into a heap of ruins like a building more than half completed on a basis of rotten foundations.

CHAPTER VII

THE ATTEMPT OF THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES TO GIVE ETHICS A FOUNDATION IN THOUGHT

Hartley and Holbach. Self-sacrifice as enlightened egoism. Altruism explained as a theory of society. Hobbes, Locke, Helvetius, Bentham. Altruism as a natural tendency existing side by side with egoism Hume and Adam Smith. The English ethics of self-fulfilment Intellectualists and intuitionists. Shaftesbury. Optimistic-ethical nature of philosophy.

AN affirmative attitude towards the world and life was such a matter of course to the moderns that they felt no need of providing it with a firmer and deeper foundation in thought. They reject pessimism as retrograde and ignorant foolishness, without any suspicion of how deeply its roots reach down into our intellectual make-up.

Nevertheless they see the necessity of finding an ultimate ground for ethical impulses. On what lines do they proceed in their attempts to discover this?

That ethics is action directed to the well-being of the community is a foregone conclusion to the modern period. It is secure against the fate of Greco-Roman thought: that of ending in resignation its attempt to find a rational ground for the ethical. But, for this very reason, it has to answer the question how the unegoistic impulses come to exist side by side with the egoistic, and in what inner relation the two stand to each other.

A period of active thought now begins, as it did after the appearance of Socrates, only that now the problem is raised by the spirit of the time and not by an individual. People again try to consider the ethical problem in isolation as if it consisted in reflections about the relation of the individual to himself and to the community which we have no need to explain in any connection with the ultimate questions regarding the meaning of the world and of life. And now

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it seems to be so much simpler than in antiquity because an attitude of affirmation towards the world, and activity directed towards the common good, are now not so much desiderated as assumed.

One may attempt to explain the relation between the egoistic and the altruistic in three ways. Either it may be supposed that the egoistic element passes into the altruistic of itself by a process of logical thought as a result of individual reflection ; or, alternatively, the altruistic may originate in the thought of the community and hence pass over into the mind of the individual ; or, thirdly, one may take refuge in the view that egoism and altruism are both innate in human nature, where they exist side by side. All three explanations are ventured, and each of them is reached by the most widely divergent roads. Nor do these always lead invariably to one or the other result. With many thinkers the different theories pass one into another and are combined or intertwined.

David Hartley (1705-1757) and Dietrich von Holbach (1723-1789) are the most thorough of those who attempt to maintain that self-sacrifice for the welfare of others is a necessary psychological deduction from the nature of egoism.¹ Hartley, a theologian who had become a physician, explains altruism as a purposive ennobling of the original impulse toward self-seeking, which takes place under the action of rational thought. Holbach, a thinker who endured much at the hands of his opponents, declares it to be a result of the fact that the individual, if he understands his own interest rightly, always comprehends it as connected with that of the community and will therefore direct his action to the well-being of the same.² Both seek to construct the lower storeys of the edifice as far as possible out of materialistic considerations, in order to finish it off

¹ D. Hartley : *Observations on Man: his Frame, his Duty and his Expectations* (1749; 6th ed., 1834).

² Dietrich von Holbach : *Système de la nature; ou, des lois du monde physique et du monde moral* (1770).

HARTLEY AND HOLBACH. SELF-SACRIFICE AS ENLIGHTENED EGOISM

with upper works of idealism. But neither with the grosser nor with the more refined class of argument, nor with a combination of the two, is this psychological evolving of altruism out of egoism able to arrive at convincing results. The grosser materialistic arguments do not take us far. It is, indeed, an established fact that the well-being of the community depends on the moral convictions of its members and thus that the individual has more prospect of well-being the more things are going well with the morality of the community. But this does not mean that the better the individual understands what are his own real interests, the more moral he becomes. The interrelation between himself and the community is not of such a sort that he derives advantages from it in exact measure as he helps by his own moral conduct to contribute to its well-being. If the majority of its members are engrossed in securing their own immediate welfare, absorbed in a short-sighted egoism, then the man who acts more far-sightedly brings an offering from which he cannot expect any profit for himself, even if, in the most favourable conditions, it is not entirely lost as far as the community is concerned. But if through the moral conduct of the majority of its members the circumstances of a community are more favourable, then the individual is advantaged thereby, even when his own character bears no relation to this general attitude. Conducting himself in an irresponsible and short-sighted way, he will cut out for himself an unduly large portion of personal well-being from the general well-being, and will milk the cow which the others feed. The actions of the individual, seen as an effect in the well-being of the community and the reaction of the well-being of the community on the individual, do not stand in a simple convertible relation to one another. The conviction that the duty of the individual is to devote himself to the well-being of the community as the result of a rightly comprehended egoism is but a leaky ship, however fast it may sail.

Therefore the psychological development of altruism

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from egoism must appeal in some form or other to the individual impulse to self-sacrifice. It does this in that it calls him to reflect that there is not only a material, but also a spiritual, side to true happiness. Not only external well-being, but also the respect with which others regard him, and satisfaction with himself, are necessary to a man. But he only experiences these as a result of his care for the well-being of others. Even Holbach, who tries to be inexorably matter-of-fact, gives full play to these considerations. In this way the attempt is made to pass from the usual egoism into a more spiritual form by passing beyond the notion of happiness which had been first assumed as a basis.

The path which is taken here runs parallel to that which led the successors of Socrates into the abyss of a paradox. In order to pass from egoism to altruism, and so to think out completely the ethics of rational hedonism, those thinkers wished to give the same value to spiritual pleasure as to material enjoyment. But thereby they only succeeded in transforming ethics into resignation. Now, in modern times, and again for the sake of ethics, spiritual happiness is to be thought of under the same category as material enjoyment. And here also the result is a paradox.

Material and spiritual happiness are not related to each other in such a way that the one can pass over into the other. If the second is called in as an ethical end it does not strengthen the first, but, on the contrary, deprives it of force and value. The man who seriously undertakes to direct his life in pursuit of spiritual happiness finds out that his recognition of the attractions of the other kind, which at first seemed almost to eclipse this, becomes continually less and less significant. In fact, this recognition is like a lump of bad solder which drops down between material and spiritual happiness without being able to unite the two. Continually does he recognize spiritual happiness more and more exclusively as the situation in which he is at one with himself, and therefore may recognize his true self as then coming into action.

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Spiritual happiness is self-sufficient. Either a man comes to a decision about ethical conduct because he expects therefrom a transformation of the external circumstances of his being which shall bring him profit and pleasure, or else he chooses it because he finds his happiness in giving expression, through ethical action, to the inner necessities of his being. In the latter case he has left far behind him all considerations regarding the connection of his morality with his material happiness. Being moral is itself his happiness, even if it bring him into the most disadvantageous positions.

But if spiritual happiness cannot be welded on to material enjoyment it is vain toil to attempt the presentation of altruism as simply an ennobled form of egoism. In so far as the usual idea of happiness is subjected to a process of refinement in order to be brought into connection with ethics, it gradually loses all its content in its attempt to become spiritual. In the Greco-Roman ethic, where the refining process goes on under the influence of an ethic motivated by egoism, it is distorted into mere pleasure in lack of pleasure, and ethics ends in resignation. In the modern process, where the too refined pleasure is under the influence of altruism, it rises only to lose itself in irrational and subjectively transcendent enthusiasm. In both cases we have to do with the same paradoxical process, only that in the first instance it works out on the negative side, in the second on the positive. Wherever thought thus attempts to explain the ethical impulse as originating in a desire for pleasure or happiness it always ends in resignation or in enthusiasm—in spiritualized egoistic or in spiritualized expansive conduct. It has always proved impossible to make a connection between pleasure and ethics really based in profound thought.

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The explanation that altruism is a principle of conduct

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which the individual takes over from the community found characteristic expression in Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679),¹ John Locke (1632-1704),² Adrien Helvetius (1715-1771)³ and Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832).⁴ Hobbes presents the State as commissioned and empowered by the totality of individuals to compel and control activities possessing general value. In this way alone, he maintains, is the common weal to be realized in which the egoism of individuals will find its highest possible well-being. Men could not of themselves break loose from their own short-sighted egoism, and were, therefore, obliged to dispense with any well-being worthy of the name. Therefore only one course remained open to them, viz., to subject themselves to an authority which should enforce on them an altruistic type of action. But the organized community cannot thus enforce on the individual by purely external means the full programme of action necessary for the general well-being. It must therefore strive simultaneously to extend its power by popularizing a certain body of intellectual convictions. John Locke takes account of this circumstance. According to him, God and the community are in league to enforce altruism on the individual by appealing to his egoism. They have, in short, as our reason tells us, arranged affairs so that actions helpful to the community are rewarded and those harmful to it are punished. God administers eternal rewards and punishments. The community works in a twofold manner : through the power which the penal law gives to it, and through the law of public opinion, in virtue of which it wields praise and blame as spiritual forces. In that man is led by the motives of pleasure and pain, he comes to adjust himself to these standards which so effectively defend the common weal, and thus becomes moral.

¹ Thomas Hobbes : *Elementa philosophica de cive* (1642); *Leviathan; or, The Master, Form, and Authority of Government* (1651); *De homine.*

² John Locke : *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (2 vols., 1690).

³ Adrien Helvetius : *Traité de l'esprit* (1758).

⁴ Jeremy Bentham : *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1780).

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In spite of all differences in detail, Hobbes and Locke are at one in this external comprehension of the essential being of the ethical. The difference is actually only that with Hobbes the community alone wields the scourge, whilst with Locke God and the community rule in partnership.

Helvetius, the son of a Protestant pastor who had emigrated to France, evolves a more refined and intrinsic doctrine. In his life as a tenant farmer and landowner he had sought, as he tells us in his writings, in company with his noble wife, both to keep his property and to maintain his integrity. It was clear to him that ethics is, in some way or other, conduct dictated by enthusiasm. Therefore the community cannot enforce it on the individual, but can only exhort to it. And, indeed, it uses all the means and devices at its command in order to influence his egoism in the direction it desires. In especial does it strive to make use of his desires for recognition and reputation. The praise which it bestows on what it calls "good", forms for the many the strongest incentive which they have to act in what are really their own interests. Perhaps Helvetius would have advanced a less external concept of the circumstances which characterize ethical action if it had not been his object, with the best intentions in the world, to present the ethical as something attractive.

In the view that ethics is conduct inspired by enthusiasm to which the individual is urged on by the community, Bentham agrees heartily with Helvetius, but he carries the idea through on a much deeper basis than does the former. Out of the ballad he makes an anthem. According to Bentham, one cannot lay too much stress on the *rôle* played by the community in the actualization of ethics. He argues forcibly against the view that the human conscience can really decide about good and evil. Nothing can be entrusted to the secret decision of subjective feeling. Only that man is truly moral who takes his ethic from the hand of the community and lives it out with inspired enthusiasm.

But if the community is to be the ethical authority it

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must first arrange its own ethical views in some sort of order. Thus it must learn to combine clear and distinct ideas with the concept of that which is "generally useful". And so it must make up its mind to take this principle, in absolutely logical fashion, as the foundation of legislation and of all ethical standards, to the exclusion of all other considerations of any sort whatever. We must construct a "moral arithmetic" which will permit us to estimate all possible ethical decisions according to their correct utilitarian values.

Bentham then shows in a dry, positive fashion, which deals with all cases of legislation and standard setting affecting the moral law, that the principle of the greatest possible happiness of as many as possible is universally applicable and can be surely and closely attuned to our own conceptions of good and evil. "The moral as in general conceived is the doctrine of the art of so conducting the actions of men that one may produce the greatest possible total of happiness." Legislation determines to what moral actions the community can give its sanction. If legislation is to work educatively it must be humanitarian through and through.

"But there are many actions which are useful to the community and which law as such has yet not power to impose upon men. There are even many actions which it cannot forbid although the moral sense does so. Legislation, in short, has indeed the same centre as morality, but it has not so large a circumference."

Where the power of law ceases there is nothing left to the community but to continually impress on the individual how much it is for his own good that he should care for that of others. But with Bentham it does not do this by a sort of educative deceit, as it does with Helvetius. It appeals to his sense of truth. It throws itself down before him and begs him to listen to reason for the sake of the common good. Thus the dry, unembellished style in which Bentham writes about ethics has in it something peculiarly attractive, and explains the mighty influence which the original personality

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who lived in the house looking out on Westminster Park has exerted through the whole world by means of those whom he inspired..

Most influential of all have been those parts of his work in which he sharpens the sight and zeal of men by leading them to reflect not only about the immediate, but also about the distant, and not only about the material, but also about the spiritual, results of a deed or of an omission. How benevolent is the courage with which this fanatic of utilitarianism seeks to present the material as the foundation of the spiritual values. Bentham is one of the most influential ethicists who have ever appeared. But his error is as great as his insight. His insight consists in the fact that he conceives ethics as enthusiasm. His error is that he thinks himself obliged to secure the purposive character of this enthusiasm by presenting it as something which is only of value to the community as a conviction taken over from the individual.

And thus Bentham, though he stands high above them in other respects, must still be classed with Hobbes, Locke and Helvetius. Like them, he considers that morality has an origin external to man himself. Like them, so as to be able to explain the altruistic element, he leaves out of consideration the ethical personality in man, and in its place raises the community to the rank of an ethical personality in order to connect individuals with this power-centre by transmission. The distinction is only that in the other three banal ethicists the individual is nothing but a marionette directed by the community according to ethical principles, whilst in Bentham he carries out the evolutions suggested to him under a deep sense of real conviction.

Ethical thought falls from one paradox into the other. If it presents us, as the Greco-Roman did, with an ethic in which activity directed to the common good is not sufficiently represented, then it arrives at an ethic in which there is no longer anything ethical, and ends in resignation. If, on the other hand, it presupposes an activity directed

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toward the common good, it arrives at an ethic without any ethical personality. It is remarkable that it seems unable to hit on the middle way, namely to suppose the origin from ethical personality of an activist ethic directed toward the common good.

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The explanations of altruism as something which arises spontaneously by the action of reason, or as an ennobling of egoism which takes place through the influence of the community, are manifestly unsatisfactory both psychologically and ethically. Utilitarianism must thus come to the point of presenting altruism as a datum given in some way or other side by side with egoism, and innate in human nature. It is true that it appears beside the other always as the more backward twin, who can only be reared as the result of the most fostering care. Thus the representatives of this third view appeal simultaneously to the convictions of both the other groups. They show us the power of the altruistic feeling as continually exposed to the influence of considerations which seem intended to incline egoism to join itself with altruism. The first two points of view are made use of as nurses for the third. Our authorities here are David Hume (1711-1776)¹ and Adam Smith (1723-1790).²

Hume agrees with the other utilitarians in maintaining that the principle of the general well-being must be taken as a supreme moral criterion. Whether actions are good or bad depends entirely on the question whether they tend to increase the general happiness or not. Nothing is either ethical or unethical by virtue of its own nature.

Hume, again, is as emphatic as the other utilitarians in denying that the self-fulfilment of man can ever be an ethical end. Like them, he is antagonistic to asceticism and

¹ *A Treatise of Human Nature : Being an Attempt to introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects* (1740), *Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751).

² Adam Smith : *The Theory of the Moral Sentiments* (1759); *Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776).

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the other demands of the Christian ethic which show a similar attitude of world-negation, because he cannot find in them any elements which have a utility value for the community.

But what is the motive which determines men to co-operate for the common good ? To this the logical utilitarians answer : The conviction of the importance of the general well-being. But Hume does not lend his suffrage to this one-sided view, because he is not in agreement with the psychological prolegomena on which it is based. He maintains that emotions and actions directed toward the general well-being arise from immediate sympathy, not from exalted reflection. The virtues which serve the common weal originate in feeling. We can make up our minds to benevolent actions only because an elemental sympathy with the happiness of other men and an elemental sorrow for their misery are innate in our minds. We become ethical through sympathy.

It would have been natural for Hume to explain this sympathy as a kind of egoistic longing for happiness, perhaps on the supposition that man must see happiness around him in order to be truly happy himself. But he does not follow such a path. He will not construe ; he will only state facts. It is enough for him that immediate sympathy with other men appears in human nature as an intrinsic element of it. We must halt somewhere or other, he thinks, in our search for final causes.

In every science there are some ultimate general principles, beyond which we cannot hope to push our inquiries.

Amongst the elements which are of importance in developing moral feeling Hume gives a high place to "love of fame". This impels us always to think of ourselves as we should like to appear in the eyes of others. Desire for the respect of others is a mighty educative force in the direction of virtue. Here Hume agrees with Frederick the Great, who declared : " L'amour de la gloire est inné dans les belles âmes ; il n'y a qu'à l'animer, il n'y a qu'à l'exciter,

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et des hommes qui végétaient jusqu'alors, enflammés par cet heureux instinct, vous paraîtront changés en demi-dieux."¹

- Adam Smith strives to follow out the thought of sympathy in all its various forms. Thus he discovers that our capacity for fellow-feeling is not exhausted by the fact that we are partakers in the weal and woe of others. It also brings us into community of thought with the actors themselves. We feel ourselves directly attracted or repelled by the actions and the motives of action of others. Our ethic is the product of these sympathetic experiences. Thus we come to have regard in our actions to the fact that it is possible for the unbiassed third party to be in sympathetic agreement with the main-spring and general tendency of what we ourselves are doing. Innate sympathy with the experience as well as with the actions of others is thus the beneficent regulator of the conduct of men toward one another. God has implanted this feeling in the nature of man so that it may impel him to labour for the general well-being. It remains unsettled how far this somewhat artificial construction of the notion of sympathy by means of the doctrine of the unbiassed third really signifies an advance on Hume.

In his famous book about the conditions which determine the well-being of nations (1776) Adam Smith finds this well-being solely upon the completely free and rational action of egoism. He does not express any opinion as to the rôle of ethics in economic questions. According to him, economic development is determined purely by its own economic laws, and his conclusion is that the result will be favourable if those laws are allowed to work themselves out without interference. It is because he holds the doctrine of rationalistic optimism that Adam Smith, the ethicist, is at the same time the founder of the economic doctrine of

¹ *Oeuvres de F. le Grand*, vol. ix., p. 98 : "Love of glory is inborn in noble souls ; it is only needful to rouse and to excite it, and men who previously were vegetating, inspired by this happy instinct, will appear transformed into demi-gods."

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laissez faire, otherwise known as the Manchester school. He it was who headed the forces of commerce in their fight for freedom from the petty and harmful guardianship of local authorities. To-day, as in every nation economic life begins to be delivered over again to the short-sighted interference of uneconomically minded Governments, we are in a position to measure the greatness of the legacy we inherit from him. Bentham also follows Adam Smith in being an adherent of the principle of freedom in economic life. But, at the same time, he has an ethical conception of the community and demands from it that it should give assistance to the spirit of progress in levelling up as far as possible the difference between rich and poor. What is the true importance of Hume and Adam Smith in the realm of ethics? They bring into it the empiric-psychological point of view. By giving a real value and significance to sympathy they imagine that they furnish utilitarianism with a natural foundation. But actually their more correct psychology begins to undermine the whole utilitarian position. Utilitarianism begins to dream of the great idea that ethics is the product of rational reflection. It tries to make man ethical by urging him to contemplate the profundity and the necessity of ethical ends.

This concept is based on the conviction that thought is all-powerful over will. The absolute rationality of the ethical is the foundation on which it builds. It cannot, unless it is willing to go wilfully astray, be satisfied to take, as the presuppositions of its ethical argument, purely psychological data which possess no other foundation.

In Hume and Adam Smith, who make ethics originate from innate instincts, the problem arises how it can be both something natural and at the same time also the product of intellectual reflection. For that it is the latter protagonists of this psychological utilitarianism are obliged to assume. If it were only the working out of an instinct it could not be subject to extension and deepening, nor would it be capable of being imparted to others with a view to its general

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acceptance. But how are we to suppose that thought can affect the sympathetic instinct? What have these two in common, that the work of the one can be helped on by the other? If they had suspected the real bearing of this ethical problem, which became so real and important because of the work they did, Hume and Adam Smith would have been obliged to go on to find a basis for the universal and profound content of the sympathy which they assumed, in order to understand how and in what way it impinges on the realm of thought. But they do not grasp the true importance of the position which they have taken up, and think that by means of psychology they have given an intellectual explanation of altruism based on the immediate circumstantial data. With its wonderful capability for joining apparently unconnected thoughts on to one another, the spirit of the time welds its views together by main force. Popular utilitarianism changes its mind without scruple and proounds with unhesitating confidence the most irreconcilable principles. Altruism is to be explained now as a rational refinement of egoism, now as a product of the influence of the community, and now as an expression of natural instinct.

In reality the new life given to utilitarianism by the psychological concept of ethics is only apparent. It is a germ of phthisis which utilitarianism absorbs into itself. The introduction of a natural element into ethics, when once it begins to have its logical consequences, will necessarily consume and destroy rational utilitarianism, as will become evident in the nineteenth century, when biological thought begins to have its influence on ethics.

In Hume and Adam Smith the train of mourners begins to assemble for the funeral of rational utilitarianism. But it is still a little while before the coffin is carried out.

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The intellectualists and intuitionists oppose themselves

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INTELLECTUALISTS AND INTUITIONISTS

to the utilitarians who try to derive the nature of the moral and the obligation to morality from the content of that same moral itself. This empirical derivation seems to the former to endanger the transcendental nature of the moral element. Ethics, according to the thought which possesses their mind, consists in aspiration after perfection. This works itself out in us because it is implanted by nature in our essential being. Action which has a utility value for the community is not *ipso facto* ethical ; rather it is only a manifestation of this same aspiration after perfection.

But the intellectualists and intuitionists do not bring this much more comprehensive concept of the ethical to its proper form of expression. They are, indeed, still too much in the toils of a half-scholastic philosophy which lacks the vital spark. Their real strength lies in their demonstration of the weakness of the ethical basis laid by Hobbes and Locke. It is in their attack on this that they especially distinguish themselves, and in doing so say much that is excellent about the direct and absolute moral obligation of the moral law. Repeatedly do they insist, in the happiest manner, that the importance of the moral element lies not only in the utility of the actions which it inspires, but also in the self-fulfilment of the individual which is reached by its means, and, again, that morality presupposes the moral personality. But when they have to face the task of showing how it is that a man carries in himself the idea of the good as a force working on him, the intellectualists and intuitionists fall into a kind of psychologizing, sometimes acute enough, but often artificial and banal. They occupy themselves in making logical distinctions instead of trying to demonstrate the real basis of man's nature.

Instead of developing the problem on sound lines in reply to their modernist opponents, they work it out with the aid of artificialities which are borrowed from a dead and gone philosophy. In much of what they say we catch an echo of Plato ; and in a good deal of it they are arguing, consciously or unconsciously, not as philosophers, but as

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theologians. They differ from each other in details and enter into controversies according as they base the ethical more intellectually, or more on mystic feeling, or more theologically. Most of these anti-utilitarians belong to the platonizing "Cambridge school". The chief names are : Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688),¹ Henry More (1614-1687),² Samuel Clarke (1675-1729),³ Richard Cumberland (1632-1719),⁴ and William Wollaston (1659-1724).⁵

According to Cudworth moral truths are just as obvious as those of mathematics. For More the ethical element is an intellectual power of the soul which gives it command over impulse. Cumberland looks upon the moral law as inherent in the reason which God has given to man. Clarke, living in the Newtonian universe of ideas, sees the moral element as a spiritual parallel to the law of nature evidenced by natural phenomena. Wollaston defines it as that which is logically correct.

But at bottom these thinkers really do nothing more than embroider the statement that the ethical element has an ethical nature. They maintain that the utilitarian view of the ethical is too sordid. They do not, however, succeed in setting up in contradistinction to this a higher ethical principle of a nature which would permit them to derive from it a more elevated and comprehensive ethical content. Their ethic does not really differ essentially from that of the utilitarians. Only it does lack the mighty, enthusiastic impulse present in the latter. The intellectualists and the intuitionists are not able to construct a living ethic of self-fulfilment.

What is the real inner connection between aspiration after self-fulfilment and action which has a utility value ?

¹ Ralph Cudworth : *Intellectual System of the Universe* (1678); *Treatise concerning Eternal and Immutable Morality* (posthumous, 1731).

² Henry More : *Enchiridion Eibicum* (1664).

³ Samuel Clarke : *A Discourse concerning the Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religions and the Truth and Certainty of Christian Revelation* (1706).

⁴ Richard Cumberland : *De legibus naturae disquisitio philosophica* (1672).

⁵ William Wollaston : *The Religion of Nature Delineated* (1722).

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This is the important ethical question which emerges in the conflict between the utilitarians and their conservative opponents. But it remains dormant at first ; it is only in Kant that it comes clearly into sight.

* * *

Anthony Ashley, Lord Shaftesbury (1671-1713),¹ holds a unique position in the ethical thought of the eighteenth century. He attacks not only the utilitarians, but also the intellectualists and intuitionists, and tries to attain a standpoint midway between the two opposing parties. That the content of ethics is utilitarian he freely acknowledges. But he does not derive the ethical element either from considerations of utility or from the intellect, but finds its original root in feeling. He lays the principal stress on its relation to the æsthetic element in us, just as Adam Smith does some years later. The great value of his teaching lies in the fact that he constructs a vital nature-philosophy with which the ethical element is indissolubly connected. He is convinced that harmony rules in the universe, and that man is intended to experience this harmony in himself. Æsthetic feeling and ethical thought are for him two forms of the process in which we become one with the Divine life, which struggles for expression in the spiritual being of man just as it does in nature.

In Shaftesbury ethics leaves the stony hillsides for the flowery plain. The utilitarians offer us no explanation of the world. They limit ethics to considerations about the relation of the individual to the community. Nor are the anti-utilitarians much better in this respect. They work out their ethics in terms of scholastic theology and in scholastic philosophizing about the All. Shaftesbury, however, develops his ethical thought in the actual universe,

¹ *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions and Times* (3 vols., 1711). The essay called *An Enquiry concerning Virtue and Merit*, which originally appeared independently (1699) is contained in the second volume.

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viewed by him through a rose-coloured veil of idealizing optimism, and thus attains a direct and universal notion of the moral.

A mysticism of nature-philosophy begins to spin its magic threads through the web of European thought.

The spirit of the Renaissance rules once more, but this time not as a roaring storm, as it does in Giordano Bruno, but as a gentle breeze. Shaftesbury thinks pantheistically, far more pantheistically than he himself would have admitted. But it is not the kind of pantheism which sets thinkers by the ears in conflict about world-views, and which is at loggerheads with theism. It is the mild kind of pantheism which obtains also in Hinduism and in the later Stoicism, which throws no direct doubt on general principles, but should rather be regarded as a gradual devitalizing of faith in God.

Shaftesbury also is satisfying to the life-spirit of his period in that he gives ethics a much freer position with regard to religion than his predecessors had dared to do. Religion is not to have the determining voice over ethics, but contrariwise its relation to pure ethical ideas is to be a criterion of its own truth and reality. Shaftesbury even dares to reject the orthodox Christian teaching about rewards and punishments as not corresponding to the results of pure ethical reflection. We only have *pure* ethics, he tells us, where good is done *for its own sake*.

He has but roughly sketched out his optimistic-ethical nature-philosophy. He throws up the ideas without really finding a basis for them, without feeling an imperative need of thinking them out thoroughly. He skims easily over the problem and passes on. What a difference there is between his nature-philosophy and that of Spinoza ! All the same his teaching met the needs of the time. He offered what was new to his contemporaries and inspired them to connect their ethics with a living view of the world.

Faith in progress surrounds itself with a living world-view which corresponds to its own nature. This was the

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process which was set in motion by Shaftesbury during the first decades of the eighteenth century, and continued to work itself out until the end of the same. And therefore his writings, which almost immediately attained a European circulation, are the most significant event in the thought-life of that century. Voltaire, Diderot, Lessing, Condorcet, Moses Mendelssohn, Wieland, Herder, yea, even Goethe, are strongly influenced by them, and in popular thought he is absolutely king and becomes the determining factor. Scarcely ever has a man exerted such a direct and mighty influence on the formation of the world-view of his period as did this sickly individual, who died in Naples at the age of forty-two. Francis Hutcheson (1694-1747)¹ and Joseph Butler (1692-1752)² were undoubtedly the ethical executors of Shaftesbury, and they derived directly from his work that fleeting indeterminateness which forms both their charm and their strength. Hutcheson, who lays much stress on the independence of ethics with regard to theology, its relation to the æsthetic element in us, and its utilitarian content, stands nearer to his master than Butler, who comes into conflict less with utilitarianism, and also objects, from the Christian standpoint, to the optimism of Shaftesbury's world-view. But the best known heir of Shaftesbury is J. G. Herder (1744-1803). In his *Ideas about the Philosophy of the History of Mankind*³ (4 vols., 1784-1791), he develops this optimistic-ethical nature-philosophy into a corresponding philosophy of history.

¹ Francis Hutcheson. *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725); *A System of Moral Philosophy* (1755, posthumous).

² Joseph Butler. *Fifteen Sermons on Human Nature, or Man considered as a Moral Agent* (1726).

³ *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BASIS OF CIVILIZATION LAID IN THE ETHICAL FAITH-IN-PROGRESS OF THE AGE OF RATIONALISM

Mentality and value of ethical faith-in-progress. Checks to the reform movement—the French Revolution. Vacillation of the rationalist world-view.

By means of the fully developed optimistic world-view with which the belief in progress surrounds itself during the course of the eighteenth century the people of that time became capable of evolving civilization-ideals and going on to realize them. That the attempts to find a rational ground for ethics had had a more than unsatisfactory result did not disturb them, if, indeed, they ever gave the fact a thought. Through the conviction that they had comprehended the world rationally in an optimistic-ethical sense they were carried over and past all the inner problems of ethics. The covenant which faith-in-progress and ethics had made with each other during the course of the modern era was sealed by the view of the world which the moderns held. Now the two attack their task in concert. Rational ideals are to be actualized.

The ethical and the optimistic thus come to power in the world-view of the eighteenth century, although they have been given no real basis. Scepticism and materialism contend around the stronghold like unconquered bands of savages. But they are not immediately dangerous; in fact, they have generally themselves absorbed a fair portion of faith-in-progress and of ethical enthusiasm. Voltaire is a classical example of a sceptic who is altogether under the influence of the optimistic and ethical thought current at the time. In its main lines the world-view of rationalism corresponds very nearly to the optimistic monism of Confucius and the later Stoicism. But the enthusiasm by which it is borne along is incomparably stronger than in the

two movements referred to. In addition the circumstances amidst which it appears are much more favourable to it. Thus it becomes a popular and elemental force. It was with a world-view derived from a high type of faith, but also standing high in the estimation of contemporary intellectuals, that the men of the eighteenth century began to think out and actualize ideals of culture to such an extent that they produced the greatest epoch in the history of human civilization.

The characteristic trait of the mentality of this faith-in-progress, a faith which fulfils itself in deeds, is its magnificent lack of respect for the realities of the past or the present. To it past and present alike represent in all their phenomena the imperfect, which is destined to be replaced by the perfect.

The eighteenth century is essentially an unhistorical period. In good as well as in bad, it cuts itself loose from what was and is, and believes itself able to replace this with something more truly valuable, because more ethical and more rational. Fired with this conviction, the age felt itself so full of creative power that it lost all appreciation for the works of creative genius in the past. Gothic buildings, the old painting, the music of J. S. Bach, and the poetry of early periods, were alike classed as forms of art which belonged to a time when taste was still undeveloped. They thought that what was fashioned according to the canons of reason would mark the beginning of a new art superior in all respects to everything which had preceded it. In this spirit of self-confidence a mediocre musician in Berlin attempted to work over and improve the *Partituren* of Bach's cantatas. In this same spirit, again, ambitious poetasters altered the text of the wonderful old German chorals and substituted their own compositions for the originals in the song-book. When the men of that period showed such a naïve belief in their own creative power in the field of art they made a mistake which has often caused amusement to subsequent generations. But there is little real ground for making fun of them. In the realms where

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rational ideas can effect transformations they are more creative than any preceding race ever was, perhaps more than any succeeding race ever will be, and the work done in this realm is of far greater significance for civilization than are any results afforded by art. No task which offered itself here was too difficult for them to attempt. And everywhere they are extraordinarily successful in the amount of actual progress attained.

They even dare to tackle the religious problem. The fact that organized religion is split up into various mutually antagonistic sections seems to them contrary to the results of rational reflection. Only relative, not absolute, authority, they say, can be allowed to a faith handed down by historical tradition. In its differing forms it can never be more than a relatively incomplete expression of the one rational ethical religion which is destined to enlighten all men in one and the same manner. Therefore it behoves us to aspire toward this rational religion and only to admit those parts of our present confessions which correspond to its general tone.

It is true that the churches took up an attitude of defence against this spirit. In the end, however, they could make no headway against convictions so strongly rooted in the mentality of the period. Protestantism was the first to succumb, and naturally so, since it lays itself open to such attacks by its very nature. It carries rationalistic elements in itself derived from the old humanism, from Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) and from the Italians Lælius and Faustus Socinus (1525-1562, 1539-1604).¹ These elements, kept under until the eighteenth century, are now set free to work.

Catholicism proved a more doughty foe. It had nothing in its past which was akin to the new spirit. Its own rigid

¹ The free, anti-dogmatic religious tone of Socinianism had maintained itself principally in Poland, Holland, Hungary, England and North America. Its earlier and later adherents were called Latitudinarians and Unitarians. The fact that religious rationalism had already a literary existence prepared the way for its reappearance in the eighteenth century.

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organization served it as a defensive weapon. But even Catholicism was obliged, in the end, to enlarge its borders considerably and to present its teaching, in so far as it was possible, as a symbolic expression of the religion of reason.

Whilst the utilitarian ethic is, in the main, the work of the English spirit, the whole of Europe took part in the attempt to construct a religion of reason. Herbert of Cherbury (1582-1648), John Toland (1670-1722), Anthony Collins (1676-1729), Matthew Tindal (1655-1733), David Hume (1711-1776), Pierre Bayle (1647-1706), J. J. Rousseau (1712-1778), Voltaire (1694-1778), Denis Diderot (1713-1784), H. S. Reimarus (1646-1728), G. W. Leibniz (1646-1731), Christian Wolff (1679-1754), G. E. Lessing (1729-1781), Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), and many others too numerous to mention, all, whether they stand nearer to, or farther from the churches, and whether they are extreme or moderate in their criticism, carried stones to build up the great edifice which the piety of enlightened humanity was to inhabit.¹ Historical investigations into the origins of religion carried on in Germany by such scholars as J. S. Semler (1725-1791), J. D. Michaelis (1717-1781), and J. A. Ernesti (1742-1781) produced scientific results which made easier the projected divorce between the eternal truths of religion and temporarily conditioned opinions regarding it.

The confession of faith of rational religion is nothing else but the optimistic-ethical world-view repeated in a Christian formula, that is, in a formula that preserves the theism and the faith in immortality characteristic of Christianity. An all-wise and all-benevolent Creator has brought the world into being and maintains it along purposive lines. Men are endowed with free will and have innate in their hearts and in their reason the moral law, the end of which is to lead individuals and humanity as a whole to a state of perfection, and to realize God's highest aims in the world. Every man

*¹ Tindal's work bears the title *Christianity as Old as the Creation* (1730). Pierre Bayle's famous *Dictionnaire historique et critique* first appeared in two volumes (1695).

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bears in himself an indestructible soul which finds its highest happiness in his ethical conduct and after death passes over into a state of pure spiritual being.¹ In the past, they thought, this faith in God, virtue and immortality had appeared in its purest form in the teaching of Jesus. It was acknowledged, however, that elements of the same were present in all the higher religions. If the eighteenth century attains to such a, in general, broad-minded and confident optimistic and ethical world-view as the above, it is because Christianity—temporarily abandoning the negative attitude toward the world and life which it really involves—proves itself capable of being connected with positive activism. Jesus is considered by these writers as the revealer of a rational religion who has been misunderstood from the beginning and throughout the centuries. Only in their own time, they proclaimed, had the meaning of His teaching really been grasped. Read, for example, the rationalist lives of Jesus written by such men as F. V. Reinhard (1753–1812) or K. H. Venturini (1768–1849).² They hailed Jesus as the pioneer champion of the *Aufklärung* and of the true happiness of the nations. The limning of the historical picture is made easier for them by the fact that the ethical teaching of the Gospels dominates the story, whilst the pessimistic world-view of later Judaism which it pre-supposes is only hinted at in them.

As an immediate result of the elimination of credal differences, we find that from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards a general attitude of tolerance replaces the antagonism toward heretical thought which was current shortly before. The last harsh act of credal intolerance was the expulsion of Protestants from the district of Salzburg

¹ The most impressive and also the most profound document of the rational religion movement is the confession of faith which Rousseau in his novel *Emile* (1762) puts into the mouth of a Savoyard pastor.

² F. V. Reinhard: *Versuch über den Plan, w. d. Stifter der obr. Relig. z. besten Menschheit entwarf* (1781, 4th ed., 1798); K. H. Venturini: *Naturl. Gesch. der grossen Propheten v. Nazareth* (1800–02); cf. A. Schweitzer: *The Quest of Historical Jesus* (3rd ed., 1922).

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by the Archbishop Count von Firmian in 1731-1732. About the middle of the century begins the general movement against the Jesuit order as being an enemy of tolerance — a movement which led to the suppression of the order by Clement XIV. in 1773.¹

Rational religion wages war not only against intolerance, but against superstition. In the year 1754, C. Thomasius, the philosopher and jurist of Halle (1655-1728), published his denunciation of the prosecution of witches.² Towards the middle of the century the courts of justice in most of the European States ceased to recognize the crimes of witchcraft and black magic. The last death sentence against a witch was carried out at Glarus, in Switzerland, in 1782.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century it began to be a mark of culture and education to fight shy of everything which carried with it the slightest taint of superstition. The will-to-progress of the eighteenth century pushes aside nationalist prejudices equally with those of religion. It goes beyond national groups to humanity, as a field in which its ideals are to become actual. Educated people became accustomed to seeing in the State not so much a national organism as merely a juridic and economic organization. It is true that the chancelleries continued to wage war, but in the minds of the people themselves the thought of international brotherhood was gaining recognition.

Will-to-progress also began to exert its influence in the realm of law. The ideas of Hugo Grotius were realized in some sort. In the thought of the eighteenth century the law of reason takes precedence of all traditional legal pronouncements. This alone is destined to have enduring authority. Concrete laws must regard the law of reason as their criterion. Fundamental rules of law, which hold good similarly everywhere, are to be deduced from the nature of man himself. The first task of the State is to

¹ Expulsion of the Jesuits from Portugal, 1759; from France, 1764; from Spain and Naples, 1767; from Parma, 1768.

² *Kurze Lehrsätze von dem Laster der Zauberei mit dem Hexenproces.*

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protect this human nature, and therewith to secure for every human unit his meed of human dignity and an inviolable share of unassailable freedom. The proclamation of "human rights" by the United States and the French Revolution only gave official sanction to what was already part and parcel of the convictions of the period. The first State in which legal torture was done away with was Prussia. Frederick the Great forbade it in 1740 by an Order of Council. In France we find traces of the practice right up to the Revolution.

With the fight against lawlessness and against inhuman laws are closely connected efforts to develop the purposive character of law. Bentham raises his voice against the laws which tolerate usury, against senseless tariff barriers, and against inhuman methods of colonization.

The period characterized by the rule of what is purposive and moral began to dawn. It was during those times that the official world absorbed the notions of duty and honour from which it formed its subsequent ideals. Profoundly rooted and essentially healthy reforms were carried through amongst the ruling classes.

The education of men for citizenship was pushed on in splendid fashion. The public weal becomes the standard by which the commands of the ruler and the obedience of the subjects are alike measured. At the same time, people began to make efforts that every man should be educated in a manner corresponding to his human dignity and tending to increase his well-being. The crusade against ignorance had begun.

Again, in material things a more rational manner of life begins to be current. Houses are built more suitably and more with an eye to the needs of the future inhabitants, and the fields are better cultivated. Even in ecclesiastical buildings there is a tendency toward improvements of this sort. The theory that reason is given to man in order to be applied logically and universally plays a great and beneficent part in the interpretation of the Gospel during this

period, even if the way in which it is carried out is foreign to our taste. At that time it often happened that sermons dealt with the best ways of manuring, irrigating and draining the fields and meadows. And the fact that the vaccination for small-pox, invented by Jenner, was taken up so quickly in so many countries was largely due to the enlightened advocacy of the pulpit.

Characteristic of the period of rationalism are the secret societies formed to advocate the material and moral progress of mankind. In the year 1717 some members of the highest strata of London society organized the Brotherhood, which at first was formed on the model of the mediæval building guilds, and was afterwards transformed into the Order of Freemasons, and gave it the task of building up the edifice of a new humanity. Round and about the middle of the century this order had spread itself through the whole of Europe—this period was indeed its bloom-tide. Princes, ministers of State and scholars joined it in great numbers and were inspired by it to take part in the work of reformation.

The Order of the Illuminated (Erleuchteten), founded in Bavaria in 1776, pursued similar aims, and in 1784 gained the upper hand of the backward Bavarian Government, which was still under the influence of the Jesuits. It was intended to form an intellectual counterblast to the Jesuits, upon whose organization it was modelled. The effectiveness of secret societies formed for the purpose of advancing the rational and moral perfection of humanity was something so self-evident to the men of the eighteenth century that they attributed identical aims to similar organizations in previous ages. In a whole series of rationalist sketches of the life of Jesus we find the supposition that the sect of the Essenes on the Dead Sea, of whom the Jewish author Josephus speaks in the first century A.D., was actually such an order, and had relations with similar brotherhoods in Egypt and India. Jesus was supposed to have been educated by it and supported by it in his assumption of the rôle of Messiah, so that he might, by using the authority

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of this popular and sacred personality, advance the cause of true enlightenment. The famous *Life of Jesus* by Karl Venturini develops this supposition in full detail, for example, members of the secret society are supposed to have formed actors, background and chorus for the miracles of Jesus. The fact that the will-to-progress created organizations in the secret societies which extended themselves far and wide through Europe was, in any case, a great factor in increasing its effective capacity.

It must be confessed that the men of the rationalistic period are not themselves so great as are their performances. It is true that they all possess personality. But this personality of theirs is not profound. It is a product of the enthusiasm which those men absorbed from the mentality of the time, and which they share with many others. The individual derives his personality from his acceptance of a ready-made world-view which affords him anchorage and ideals. He really adds nothing of his own except the readiness to be inspired. It is for this reason that the men of the period are so extraordinarily alike. They all partake together of the same nourishing dish. Never, however, have the ideas of the Purposive and the Ethical possessed such power over objective reality as amongst those men of optimism without sparkle, and of morality inspired by benevolent activity. No book has yet correctly appreciated and described their attainments with due regard to their number, their real significance, their high type, and the creative power which they evidence. We only really understand what they effected because we are now experiencing the tragical fact that we have again lost the most valuable part of it without feeling in ourselves the power to re-create it. They were masters of objective facts to an extent which we are in general unable to picture to ourselves.

Only a world-view which affords the same result as that of rationalism has the right to criticize rationalism. The

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greatness of that philosophy is that it is a work-a-day faith. It is, if one may so say, horny-handed.

* * *

The great work of reform does not come to an end just because outward circumstances arise which check it, or even because the world-view of rationalism has been severely shaken from within. In its reliance on the enlightening power of reason the will-to-progress is inclined to under-estimate the obstructive force of tradition and custom, and to attempt to carry through reforms where there has not been sufficient previous preparation of thought. Reactions which harm the work permanently follow these unsuccessful attempts to advance. This happened in the south-east of Europe. Joseph II. of Austria, who reigned from 1765-1790, is the typical rationalistic reforming prince. He abolished torture, opposed capital punishment, did away with serfdom, granted civil rights to the Jews, introduced new systems of legislation and of legal administration, set aside class privileges, contended for equal justice for all in the law courts, protected the oppressed, founded schools and hospitals, granted freedom of the Press and freedom of movement throughout the country, abrogated State monopolies, and promoted the development of agriculture and industry.

But he was on the wrong throne. He decreed these reforms, and added more, one after another, in countries which were not yet prepared for them because they were intellectually still completely under the influence of the Catholic Church, and, in addition, were specially backward because they belonged to the zone which in the Europe of that period was, as it were, on the edge of Asia. Thus he could not count on self-sacrifice among the classes who were asked to give up their privileges, nor could he reckon on being understood by the common people.

In his attempt to organize the monarchy in a form at once unified and purposive he came into conflict with the

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various nationalities which composed it. The limitation of the number of convents, undertaken on grounds of national economy, the introduction of freedom of the Press and of State education, brought on him the enmity of the Church. It was because he thus sat on the wrong throne that this noble reforming Emperor died of a broken heart.

Thus, at the flood-tide of the will-to-progress, its force proved ineffective in Austria on account of the collateral circumstances we have just mentioned. Things went from bad to worse in Eastern Europe until the problem of Austria and the southern Danube States in general became quite insoluble. The result we have seen in our own day. The whole of Europe has been plunged into wretchedness and misery because of this unhealed plague spot.

In France the wrong men sat in high places. In that country ideas had prepared the way thoroughly for reforms. But the reforms were not put in hand because the rulers failed to understand the signs of the times, and let the whole organization of the State fall into ruin. In consequence of this the reform movement took the way of revolution. In this process the conduct of affairs slipped from the hands of educated men and fell into those of the mob. From these it was taken again by that man of genius, Napoleon. Born in an island in which Europe and Africa meet, and which lacks the deeper culture, he was not originally brought under the influence of the most important thoughts and convictions of his day. Led only by the power of his own personality, he determined the destinies of Europe and flung it into wars which filled it with misery. Thus from East and from West mischief and destruction overwhelmed the work initiated, and partially completed, by the will-to-progress.

The French Revolution is a fall of snow on blossoming trees. A transformation which promised much was at that time in progress on all sides, noiseless and gradual though it might be. A preparation of extraordinarily great value was going on in the minds of men. Had conditions

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remained even in some degree normal, it is certain that an enormous and unprecedented advance in the development of the European races must have taken place. Instead of that, a chaotic period of history set in during which the will-to-progress was obliged more or less to hold up its activities and to become merely an alien spectator. The first great movement of reformed thought—thought thoroughly conscious of its ends and in every way purposive and ethical—came to a standstill.

An experience was vouchsafed to the will-to-progress for which it was in no way prepared. Hitherto this had had to deal only with an objective world which was largely in a state of decadence. During the French Revolution, and during what followed it, it learnt to know another world which was concerned with elemental forces. Up to then the will-to-progress had dealt only with the driving force of rational thought. In Napoleon it came face to face with personal creative genius—a far mightier power.

Napoleon created a new form of State—a new political entity as it were—by his magnificent re-organization of France, a re-organization, however, which was concerned entirely with bureaucratic technicalities. It is true that his work also had been preceded and prepared for by rationalist influences, in so far as these had broken up the old *régime* and had set up in its place the idea of a new organization necessitated by the demands of reason.

But the new State, now become a realized fact, was not the ethically rational State of philosophical dreamers, but only a State which functioned well technically. The results attained by it compel our admiration, it is true. In the garden of art which the will-to-progress had laid out for itself in order to fill it with noble blossoms, a single gigantic figure ploughs out one great field for himself alone : immediately it produces an abundant harvest. The fact that the elemental creative powers of actuality affirmed themselves so grandly was in itself a shock to the spirit of the time, and filled it with uncertainty, an uncertainty from which it

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never fully recovered. For this spirit, though it aimed at higher and nobler ends than did Napoleon, yet lacked his genius in its general incarnation. Hegel, who saw Napoleon ride by after the battle of Jena, tells us that he had seen the World-Spirit sitting on horseback. In these words the bewildered intellectualism of the time exactly expresses itself.

A development set in which exerted an influence counter to that of the spirit of the time. The hitherto uncontradicted authority of the rational ideal was shattered. The forces of actuality unattuned to this ideal demand and secure recognition.

Whilst the will-to-progress stood an amazed spectator of events the influence of historical tradition, with which it seemed to have had its final reckoning, took on a fresh lease of life. In religion, in art, and in law, men begin, shyly and timidly at first, to glance once more at the traditional with other and more appreciative eyes than hitherto. And now it is not thought of merely as something only fit for destruction. People dare to admit that it contains elements of intrinsic value. Everywhere the forces of reality, previously trampled under foot, begin to re-assert themselves. A guerilla war ensues against the will-to-progress.

The various credal religions abjure their dismissal at the hands of rational religion. Historical legal systems again assert themselves against rational law. In the atmosphere of sympathy for suffering aroused by the Napoleonic wars nationalist thought attains a new significance. It appropriates the ready-made general enthusiasm for ideals and begins to absorb it. The wars which are now waged with each other by whole peoples, no longer merely by chancelleries, are fatal to the ideals of world-citizenship and international brotherhood. Through this re-awakening of national thought a whole series of political problems of European importance become insoluble. Just as the organization of Austria into the form of a unified modern State had previously been made impossible, so now the

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civilization of Russia suffers a similar fate. The doom of Europe begins to be accomplished, namely, that she should fall to pieces because of the non-European and uncivilized elements contained in her.

After the Napoleonic period had run its course the whole of Europe was left in misery. Far-sighted ideas had no power to actualize themselves. Palliative measures, only calculated to meet the obvious need of the moment, proved merely temporary in effect. Thus the will-to-progress cannot recover itself.

What is especially fatal for it is a fresh factor, namely, that all personalities who have any right to be considered independent feel the influence of this new valuation of the objectively actual, and thus begin to appreciate the one-sided and doctrinaire character of the rationalist point of view.

But up till now the will-to-progress had seemed to be in no real danger. It had engaged only in unimportant skirmishes with the romanticists and realists. It retained its power for a long time yet. Bentham still remains a great authority.

Alexander II. of Russia (1801–1825) instructed the commission on legislation which he set up to consult the opinion of this English writer in all doubtful cases. Madame de Staél declared that the fateful period in which she was living would be known by posterity not as the age of Buonaparte, but as that of Bentham.¹

The noblest men of the period still hold to the unshaken conviction that the early and definitive victory of the purposively moral element cannot be prevented by anything whatever. The philosophic mathematician and astronomer, the Marquis Marie Jean de Condorcet (1743–1794), whilst on the list of those condemned to death by the Jacobins and lying concealed in a small dark room in the Rue des Fossyeurs in Paris, continued to work on his historical sketch

¹ Her mot is reprinted in the English newspaper *The Atlas*, of January 27th, 1828.

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of the Progress of the Human Spirit.¹ Then, after his betrayal, he wandered awhile among the stone-breakers of Clamart, was recognized by the workmen as an aristocrat in spite of his disguise, and finally poisoned himself in the prison of Bourg la Reine. The documental creed of ethical belief in progress composed by him closes with a description of the era expected in the immediate future, in which Reason, having attained permanent control, will secure for every human being his rights as such, and will establish purposive and ethical relationships in every direction.

There remained, it is true, one element missed by Condorcet and those who thought as he did. Their faith in a final good could still have been justified if the will-to-progress had only been endangered by the unfavourable external circumstances, the value newly attributed to objective reality, and the romantic idealizing of the past. But it was more seriously threatened ; the confidence of rationalism rests on this, that it sees the optimistic-ethical world-view as a demonstrated fact. This, however, is not true ; rather does this world-view rest, like that of Confucius and the later Stoicks, on a crude interpretation of the world. Every more profound effort of thought, alike when it is not attuned to such a view as when it is destined to establish it, must thus in the end work so as to destroy it. Thus Kant and Spinoza are both fatal to it. Kant shatters it in his very effort to find a deeper foundation for the essence of the ethical. Spinoza, the great seventeenth century thinker, throws it into confusion when his nature-philosophy, a hundred years after his death, commences to occupy the minds of men.

About the end of the century, at a time when it begins to experience a check under the influence of external and intellectual circumstances; the optimistic-ethical world-view at last becomes conscious of the difficult problems which are involved in its own acceptance.

¹ *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (published posthumously by the National Convent after the author's death).

CHAPTER IX

THE OPTIMISTIC-ETHICAL WORLD-VIEW AS PRESENTED BY KANT

Kant's ethic—profound, but lacking in content. *Kant's attempt to combine ethical and epistemological idealism.*

In the general course of his thought Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) lived altogether in the optimistic-ethical world-view of rationalism.¹ But he had the feeling that its foundations were not laid with sufficient depth and permanency. He saw it as his task to plant them on grounds safer and surer in every respect. It seemed to him that a more profound ethics and a less crude certitude about the assertions of the world-view concerning supra-sensuous things, were demanded.

Like the English intellectuals and intuitionists, Kant is troubled by the fact that the ethics in which the moderns find both satisfaction and their impulse to activity has its basis only in reflection about the utilitarian value of ethical action. Like them he feels that it is something more than this, and that in the last resort it must have its origin in man's own need of self-fulfilment. But whilst his predecessors remained stuck fast in a welter of half-scholastic philosophical and theological expedients, he tackled the problem along the line of pure ethical thought.

In this way it was revealed to him that the originality and sublimity of the Moral are only secured when we think of it not as a means to an end but as an end in itself. The ethical may indeed prove itself to have a general utilitarian value and purpose, but all the same, it must originate in a pure inner necessity of our nature. The utilitarian ethic

¹ Immanuel Kant : *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781); *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1785); *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788); *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790); *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft* (1793); *Metaphysik der Sitten* (1797).

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must give way before the ethic of immediate and absolute duty. This is the meaning of the doctrine of the Categorical Imperative.

The English anti-utilitarians had one thought in common with utilitarians, namely, that the moral law is essentially related to the empirical law of nature. Kant, on the other hand, maintained that it has nothing to do with the natural world-order, but originates entirely from supramundane impulses. He was the first thinker since Plato to present the ethical element as the enigmatical essence of our nature as human beings. In the Critique of Practical Reason he declares in words of potent force that the ethical is a Will which lifts us above ourselves, frees us from the natural order of the world of sense and makes us members of a higher world-order. This is his great discovery in the realm of philosophy.

But in working out this principle he was not so fortunate. If we are to maintain the absolute nature of moral obligation, we must necessarily attribute an absolute and universal content to the moral in itself. Kant had thus set himself the task of demonstrating the existence of a principle of conduct which lights up our course for us as being at once absolutely binding on us, and, at the same time, lying at the root of all our ethical duties of whatsoever kind. If he could not succeed in doing this he would have nothing but a patchwork to offer us at long last.

Plato insists on the supramundane and enigmatical nature of ethics, and his view of the world puts at his disposal an intrinsic fundamental principle of the ethical corresponding to this transcendence and inscrutability. He is in a position where he can define the ethical as something pure from, and free of, the world of sense. This is his real ethic which he develops in the places where he is consistent with himself. On the other hand, wherever he succeeds in emerging with an activist ethic, he has got hold again of the popular doctrine of virtues.

Kant, on the other hand, as a child of the modern spirit,

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finds it impossible to attribute an ethical value to a negative attitude toward life and the world. And so he sees himself, since he can only go a part of the way with Plato, up against the confusing task of establishing for a purposively activist ethic working on the empirical world, an origin derived from transcendent impulses undetermined by any empirical purpose. But he cannot solve the problem. It is, in fact, insoluble in the way in which he goes about it. Unfortunately, he is not even clear about the fact, to us obvious, that the problem with which he is presented concerns the establishment of a fundamental principle of the moral founded in the necessities of thought. It is enough for him, apparently, to characterize the ethical obligation formally as something absolutely binding on us. He will not confess that duty remains an empty notion unless we have been able to give it a real content. And, therefore, his fundamental principle of the moral loses all effectiveness as the price of this lack of content. We find in his *Prolegomena to a Metaphysic of Morals* (1785), and later, in his *Metaphysic of Morals*, preliminaries to an attempt at establishing such a fundamental principle as we have desiderated, namely, one possessing real content. In the work of 1785 he gets as far as to say "act in such a manner that thou mayest employ human nature, equally in thy own person and in that of every other man, as an end in itself, never merely as a means". Instead, however, of seeing to what an extent the totality of ethical duties may be developed in pursuit of this principle, he sets out in the work of 1797 to propose two ends for ethics, one's own perfection and the happiness of others, and to spread himself in a description of the virtues desirable for such ends.

In laying a foundation for an ethic which has self-perfection as its aim he begins with a sure instinct by premising that all the virtues which are in any way involved in such a process are to be comprehended as expressions of candour and awe in face of our own spiritual being. But he does not follow this up by conceiving both these ends as a unity. Neither does he take up the problem of discovering the inner

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connection between aspiration after one's own perfection and that directed toward the common weal, and following on this to make plain the utmost roots of the ethical principle as such.

How far Kant is from solving the problem of intrinsically determined root principles becomes clear when we remember that he never got beyond a very narrow concept of the realm of ethics. In fact, he makes it a principle of his system to draw the limits of ethics as narrowly as possible. Ethics has no concern with anything but a man's obligations to his fellow men. The conduct of man toward the non-human part of the creation is entirely outside its scope. It is only quite indirectly that he introduces a prohibition of cruelty to animals, and then he makes it one of a man's duties towards himself. "By cruel treatment of animals," he says, "our sympathies with their sufferings become atrophied, and thus one of the most desirable natural impulses to ethical conduct in our relations with our fellow men is weakened and gradually uprooted"; and again, the vandalism shown in the destruction of beautiful things considered as pictures of nature, though themselves without feeling, he considers to be unethical only because it contradicts a man's own obligations to himself in that it does violence to the feeling which demands that ethical conduct should love everything without regard to its mere utility.

But if the realm of the ethical is limited to the conduct of a man toward his fellow men, then all attempts to arrive at a fundamental principle of the moral, possessing an absolutely obligatory content, will obviously be devoid of any prospect of success. Universality is an attribute of absoluteness as such. If there is really a root principle of the moral, then it must be related in some way or other to life as such in all its aspects.

Thus Kant does not attempt to develop an ethic really corresponding to his own profound notion of the ethical. On the whole, we may say that he does nothing more than

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place the utilitarian ethic which he found ready to his hand under the protection of the Categorical Imperative. He constructs a mere common lodging-house behind a magnificent façade. His influence on contemporary ethics was of two kinds. His teaching was advantageous to it in so far as he stirred it up to profound reflection about the essence of the ethical impulse and about the ethical determination of the individual man. But at the same time he was a danger to it, in that he took away its effective force. The strength of the ethics of the rational age lies in its crude utilitarian enthusiasm. Man, according to it, is taken directly into the service of the good aims which he sets before himself. Kant, however, makes it uncertain of this in that he questions this immediacy, and requires the ethical principle to originate in much less elementary considerations. But depth is gained at the cost of vitality because no intrinsic ethical principle is established which has force in both a deep and in an elementary way.

Very often Kant seems to go directly to work to stop up the natural sources of morality. For example, he does not seem to have regarded direct sympathy with others as ethical. The inward partaking of the suffering of another must not be allowed to reckon as a duty in the real sense of the word, but only as a weakness by which the evil in the world is doubled. All the assistance we give to others ought to be a result of direct reflection about our obligation to advance the happiness of other men.

In so far as he takes away from the effectiveness and immediacy of contemporary ethics Kant also breaks up the partnership into which it had entered with belief in progress, and which had been so productive of results. The fatal separation between these two, which became complete during the course of the nineteenth century, was introduced in part by Kant. Kant brings contemporary ethics into danger because he tries to substitute a more profound conception of the ethical for the naïvely rationalistic notion of his time, without being in a position to set up in its place a correspondingly profound, directly convincing intrinsic

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fundamental principle of the same. He works away at the new foundation without noticing that the house, with its proper supports removed, is beginning to show yawning cracks.

* * *

Kant passes over the problem of the intrinsically determined fundamental principle of the moral because in undertaking to deepen the general notion of the ethical he is following an end which really lies outside the province of ethics. His idea is to connect ethical idealism with an idealistic conception of the world derived from epistemology. In this way, he thinks, it will be possible to evolve an ethical view of the world which will satisfy critical thought. How is it that Kant, with a rigorism which deliberately sets aside our ordinary moral experience, has ventured to proclaim his discovery that the moral law has nothing to do with the natural world-order, but is supra-sensible? It is because he persists in regarding the world of sense which is revealed to us empirically in time and space as being merely the phenomenal form of a non-sensuous existence which forms the real underlying actuality. The notion of a pure moral principle conditioned by an intrinsic intellectual sense of obligation is for Kant the telescopic ladder which he draws out in order to ascend by means of it into the region of Being-in-itself. He experiences no feeling of vertigo when he mounts in company with his ethics far above all empirical experience and all empirical ends. He means to carry it right up to the top, and it cannot be too *a priori* for him, since he has put up another ladder equally high, that, namely, of epistemological idealism, by the side of the first, so that it may furnish him with an auxiliary and simultaneous support.

How does it come about that the theoretical supposition that the world of sensuous phenomena has behind it as its source a non-sensuous world of Being-in-itself is so signifi-

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cant for our view of the world ? Because, says Kant, there is present in the notion of absolute obligation which man discovers in himself a real piece of the eternal non-sensuous world by which the world-order is maintained. In this way, he thinks, it is possible to deduce as certainties from the existence of the ethical element in us the great corollaries of the non-sensuous world, which are of such real value for the optimistic-ethical world-view, namely, the ideas of God, of ethical freedom, and of immortality, whose existence must otherwise remain merely problematical. When rationalism affirms the idea of God, ethical free-will, and immortality, which together make up its optimistic-ethical world-view, simply from the standpoint of the theoretical judgment without any further proof, it is built on a foundation which is unsound from the point of view of critical thought. It is for this reason that Kant wants to raise the optimistic-ethical world-view as a pile work—the piles being driven in, as it were, by the force of ethics. The three ideas named ought to be able to lay claim to reality as necessary postulates of thought—such is his theory.

But the project of securing the optimistic-ethical world-view in this way is not realizable. It is only the idea of ethical free-will which can be demonstrated as a logical postulate of the moral consciousness. In order to show that the ideas of God and immortality are exactly similar "postulates" Kant is obliged to say good-bye to all straightforward argument and to make use of daring and ever more daring sophisms. Epistemological and ethical idealism will not go in double harness, however attractive such an undertaking seems at the first view. If we try to proceed with this combination, that which happens as a causal result of freedom and of, which man becomes conscious through the moral law, turns out to be the very same as that which holds sway in the world of things-in-themselves. A fatal transposition of the ethical and the intellectual takes place. If the world of sense is only the phenomenal form of an immaterial world, then everything

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in the time and space causality of necessarily conditioned occurrences is only the parallel phenomenon of the events which follow in the wake of the spiritual causality of freedom. All occurrences, human actions, just as much as natural events, are thus, whichever way one looks at it, both spiritual and free, and natural and determined.

If the ethical action of a free spirit is conceived by analogy with the results of epistemological idealism, then either the whole welter of world happenings understood as spiritual events are ethical or else there are no such things as ethical events in any sense. As a result of the combination which it thus presupposes, this way of looking at things is quite unable to maintain the distinction between human action and occurrences in the objective world. But the very life of ethics depends on the vital force involved in this distinction.

Epistemological idealism is a dangerous partner for ethics. The world-order of the immaterial event has a supra-ethical character. From the partnership of ethical idealism with that of epistemology we can never get an ethical world-view, but only a supra-ethical. Thus ethics has nothing to expect from epistemological idealism ; on the contrary, it has everything to fear. The ethical world-view is not helped but harmed when the reality of our objective world-view is destroyed. Ethics has materialist instincts. It desires to busy itself with empirical occurrences and to transform the conditions of the empirical world. ~~But if~~ the empirical world is only the phenomenal shell of a spiritual world-process which is going on within or behind it, then ethics is deprived of its object. To desire to influence a play of appearances, which is really determined by an unseen force, would be utterly senseless. And so ethics can admit the view that the empirical world is appearance, only with the qualification that action which affects the appearance at the same time influences in some way the reality which lies behind it. Therefore it is necessarily in conflict with all epistemological idealism.

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Kant succumbs to the same fate which befell the Stoics, and both Indian and Chinese monism. Whenever thought sets out to conceive ethics in any fashion as connected with occurrences in the objective world, it immediately, whether it is conscious of this or not, arrives at a supra-ethical point of view. To transform ethics into an ethical view of the world is necessarily to bring it into agreement with nature-philosophy. And then ethics is always swallowed up by nature-philosophy in some way or other, even if it is saved verbally. The combination of ethical and epistemological idealism is only a roundabout way of arranging a relationship between ethics and nature-philosophy, by which they hope to cheat the logic of facts. But it cannot be cheated. The tragical result is evident in the equation of the ethical and the spiritual which is produced.

The ethical is not something a-rational which becomes explicable only when we pass from the world of phenomena to the realm of immaterial existence which lies behind it. Its spiritual nature is of a peculiar kind and rests on the fact that the natural occurrence as such comes into conflict with itself in man. Therefore ethical will and ethical freedom are not explicable by means of any epistemological theory, and equally they cannot be used as supports for any such theory.

In that Kant comprehends the moral law and the empirical uniformities of nature as being in absolute contradiction to one another, his world-view is so far dualistic. But subsequently, in order to satisfy the monistic and optimistic world-view which the spirit of his day prescribed, he proceeds again along ways consonant with the monistic point of view, enabled to do so by using the fallacies with which he is furnished by his combination of ethical and epistemological idealism.

Kant is great as an ethical thinker, great, too, in the epistemological realm. With regard to the question of world-view he is but mediocre. Through his profound conception of the nature of the ethical, which led him into a

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dualist form of thought, the problem of the optimistic-ethical world-view is presented to us in a manner entirely fresh. Difficulties revealed themselves of which men were unaware up to that time. Kant does not deal with these. He was dazzled by his ambition to become the Copernicus of the ethical world-view. He believed that he could demonstrate the difficulties which he had raised in the path of the ethical world-view to be merely misunderstandings which would solve themselves as soon as actual conditions should be substituted, by means of his epistemological idealism, for the inexplicable phenomena which conceal them. But all he really does is to replace the crude optimistic-ethical interpretation of the world used by the rationalists with a fallacious one of his own. He does not trouble himself to ask what is the real centre and essence of the optimistic-ethical world-view, on what judgments and postulates it ultimately depends, and how far these are themselves secured for us by our experience of the moral law. He takes them over ready-made in the formula about God, freedom and immortality with which rationalism has furnished him, and tries to raise them to the level of certainty in this naive form.

Thus in Kant's philosophy the most fearsome lack of thought is woven in with thought of a most profound nature. New truths of extraordinary power appear in the course of his philosophizing. But they never get more than half-way along the road. The absolute nature of ethical obligation is indeed conceived by him ; but its content is never thoroughly established. Our experience of the ethical is thus recognized as the great secret, in which we comprehend ourselves as something other than the objective world ; but the dualistic thought which is involved in this is not worked out any further. It is admitted that our ultimate judgments concerning our view of the world are postulates of the ethical will ; but the logical results of this supremacy of the will over the intellect are never thought out to completion.

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Kant was extraordinarily stimulating for the men of his time. He was unable to make secure for them the optimistic-ethical world-view in which they lived. His real mission was, although both he and they tried to hide it from themselves, to make them deeper . . . to make them doubt themselves.

CHAPTER X

NATURE-PHILOSOPHY AND WORLD-VIEW

Spinoza's attempt to develop an optimistic world-view from nature-philosophy.
Leibniz : optimistic-ethical world-view side by side with nature-philosophy.

At the very time when Kant began to influence the minds of men the philosophical thought of Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677)—who had already been dead a century—was simultaneously at work urging men on to search for a world-view.¹ This was a philosophy of an entirely different character and construction. *The Critique of Pure Reason* appeared in 1781. In the year 1785 F. H. Jacobi, in his letter *Über die Lehre des Spinoza*, addressed to Moses Mendelssohn, called attention again to the philosopher whom up to that time people had always attacked, but had never tried to understand.

Spinoza aims at developing ethics from real nature-philosophy. He makes no attempt to give an optimistic-ethical significance to the universe, or to manipulate it with any sort of epistemological theory. In every respect he is of the same essence as it is. His philosophy is thus an elementary nature-philosophy. But he presents it as a highly developed system of thought. Starting with a Cartesian presentation of the problem and a Cartesian phraseology, he draws out his thought about the universe in "geometrical fashion" in a series of linked axioms, definitions, dogmas and demonstrations. It is a magnificent nature-philosophy, but one of icy clarity and coldness, which lies before us in his works.

¹ *Tractus theologico-politicus* (anonym., 1670), *Eibica ordine geometrico demonstrata* (posth. and anonym., 1677); *Tractatus politicus* (posth. and anonym., 1677); the first complete collection of Spinoza's works (1802-3).

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His *magnum opus*—it only appeared after his death, because he himself did not dare to publish it—he called his “Ethics”. The title is confusing because in it nature-philosophy is almost as fully developed as ethics. It is only if the reader has become free from all crudities of thought about the universe that, according to Spinoza, he can enter the realm of ethics. The fact that the ethical part also is divided up into demonstrated bits of dogma is very detrimental to its clear presentation.

Spinoza takes the following road in his attempt to find a foundation for ethics in nature-philosophy. All that is, he says, is already given in the Infinite Being which one may call either God or Nature. For us, and with reference to us, it presents itself in two aspects of being, as thought (spirit) and as substance (matter). In this divine nature everything, including human activity, is determined by necessity. Thus things only happen. There is really no such thing as action. Therefore the significance of human life cannot consist in action, but only in the attainment of a clearer comprehension of our relation to the universe. Man attains happiness if he not only belongs to the eternal by virtue of his nature, but consciously and willingly surrenders to it and is spiritually received into it.

Thus Spinoza calls for a higher experience of life. Together with the Stoics and the Indian and Chinese thinkers, he belongs to the great family of monistic pantheistic nature-philosophers. Like these, he comprehends God only as the inner content of nature, and has no use for any idea of God except one thus unified with itself. The attempts to represent God, in the interests of an ethical world-view, as at the same time a personality standing outside the universe, appear to him to stultify thought. Their object is only to create, with the help of an acknowledged or unacknowledged dualism, a halting place on which to construct an optimistic-ethical world-view. They struggle along crudely religious byways toward the goal which the rational optimistic-ethical significance of the

universe also strives to reach along the direct, but really no less crude, intellectual high road.

The tragical result of monistic thought in Stoicism and also in Indian and Chinese philosophy is that self-consistent nature-philosophy only leads us to resignation and not to ethics. Did Spinoza avoid this fate?

Like Lao-tzü, Chüang-tzü, Lie-tzü and the Chinese thinkers in general, Spinoza marches along the path of optimistic monism without suspecting that he has such great predecessors under a distant sky and in a distant age.¹ His resignation has an affirmative character. He comprehends the eternal being not as something devoid of qualities, as the Indians do, but as a life filled with content. Therefore the perfection which man ought to strive after is not, as it is to those, in some sort an anticipation of what awaits us after death, but a living out of life to the full which centres around profound reflection. A noble egoistic affirmation of the world and of life speaks from his pages as from those of Chüang-tzü. The struggle of man to become clear as to his nature and destiny is thus not directed toward any sort of action recognized as possessing real value, but only to realizing his own essential being and living it out as completely as possible. Whatever he does for others he never does for their sakes, but always for his own.

Spinoza refuses to view the great conquest of modern ethics, influenced as that ethics is by Christianity, namely, altruism, as anything which really belongs to the nature of ethics as such. He confines himself to the thought that all ethical action is at bottom directed to further ~~our own~~, even if it be our highest spiritual, interests. Of his own free will he returns to the state of imprisonment in which the ethics of antiquity lived, in order that he may not bring in any thought that is not logically necessary. If he could let himself go he would preach a crusade against moral teaching about love and duty just as Chüang-tzü does. But since

¹ Lao-tzü, B. Kirke (604 B.C.): *The Tao-te King*; Chüang-tzü (fourth century B.C.): *The True Book of the Southern Flower Land*; Lie-tzü (fourth century B.C.): *The True Book of the Sources of Being*.

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the authorities, the Jewish and Christian theologians, and in addition, all the philosophers, were already antagonistic to him, he was obliged to walk warily, and to bring to men's notice as stealthily as possible this view of life based on a thoughtful and profound egoism.

Just as God, the inner content of universal being, does not act in pursuit of purposive ends but from an inner necessity, so also does the man who has attained to insight. He does whatever is fitting and needful for the complete and perfect life, and nothing else. Virtue is capacity for the highest degree of self-preservation, and the highest degree of self-preservation is present where reason is at its highest power and where aspiration after knowledge and freedom from emotion take possession of a man and make him free. That is, they allow him to be determined only and solely by himself and from within. The ordinary man is moved hither and thither by external causes in manifold ways and oscillates unwitting of his fate and destiny like a ship tossed hither and thither on the unruly waves of a stormy sea. Ethics consists in this, that we live out our life more in the phenomenal form of thought than in that of physical reality. In profound and enlightened egoism and acting purely from intellectual impulses, man conducts himself with nobility and dignity in every respect. He strives, as far as he can, to meet with affection and gentle dignity whatever he has to endure of hatred, anger and scorn, because he knows that hatred always produces aversion and repugnance. He seeks an atmosphere of peace at any cost to himself in order that he may be able to recreate such an atmosphere around him. He never acts deceitfully, but always with integrity.

He has no need to feel sympathy since he lives by the guidance of reason ; he does the good which is set before him to do as the outcome of intellectual reflection. And thus he does not need to be urged on to magnanimity by previous experience of opposite conduct toward himself on the part of others. He avoids sympathy. Continually and

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repeatedly he makes clear to himself that everything which happens, happens from the necessity of the divine nature and according to eternal laws. As he finds nothing in the world which deserves hate and mockery and scorn, thus also he finds nothing which awakes sympathy. A man ought to strive to be virtuous and glad-hearted. If he is conscious of having acted rightly within his ordained limits, then he may leave humanity and the world to their fate with perfect tranquillity of soul. Outside the possible range of his own actions he has no need to take any part in their lives or to interest himself in them.

The wise man who practises the higher affirmation of life possesses true power. He has power over himself and power over men and conditions. How very nearly the thoughts of Spinoza are attuned to those of Lao-tzü, Chüang-tzü and Lie-tzu ! Spinoza practised his own ethics. He lived out his life, to which consumption set an early limit, in contented independence. He earned, for the most part by grinding optical glasses, what he needed for his own maintenance. He declined material help from friends. He refused a call to become a teacher of philosophy in the University of Heidelberg. His self-control was admirable, and his philosophy of resignation was lightened by a gentle trait of reflective human friendliness. The persecutions to which he was subjected failed to embitter him. Although he aspired to think along lines of pure nature-philosophy, yet Spinoza does not occupy himself so exclusively with the two great natural existences, namely, nature and the individual man, as do many of his Chinese predecessors. But he maintains some interest in organized society. He is quite sure that it is a significant step in progress when men pass from the "natural" to the "civic" status. Man, designed for life in society, is freer if the duties and privileges of each one and the way in which he and the community are to behave to each other are all settled by common agreement. The State must thus possess power to distribute general instructions for the conduct of life and create respect for its laws by means of fitting penalties.

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But Spinoza does not seem to have constructed a real ethic of self-sacrifice for the sake of the community. According to him, the complete human society comes into being by itself without external help in so far as the individuals composing it live according to reason. In contradistinction to his contemporary Hobbes, Spinoza does not thus look for the progress of society as a result of correct action on the part of its rulers, but rather as growing from the development of personal conviction on the part of its ordinary members. The State is not to train its citizens for rational subjection to ordained rulers, but to educate them up to a true use of freedom. It must not suppress their sincerity and integrity in any way. Consequently, it must tolerate all religious points of view, however various these may be.

In spite of his consonance in many ways with the spirit of his time, there is one thing in which Spinoza cannot agree with it, namely, that there are objectively material, ethical ends to be realized in the world. Far outrunning his contemporaries, he reaches a general concept of ethics. He recognizes that from the standpoint of logical thought all ethical conduct can be only an expression of the relation of the individual to the universe. But when ethics has become universal in this sense it is brought up short by the question how and in what way the relation of the individual to the universe is comprehensible as action on the universe. On the answer to this question depends whether it can establish a real activist ethic or whether it offers only so much ethic as can ever be secured by presenting a philosophy of resignation in the garb of ethics. This is the rock on which all real nature-philosophy is liable to come to grief. And if a thinker imagines that with good seamanship and a favourable breeze he will be able to sail round it, yet in the end he is driven on to it all the same by the strong under-currents, and suffers a like fate to that of his predecessors.

Like Lao-tzü and Chüang-tzü, like the Indians and the

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Stoics, and, in general, all the self-consistent nature-philosophers before him, Spinoza cannot offer what ethics demands, namely, that the relation of man to the universe should be comprehended not only as intellectual and spiritual, but at the same time as active altruism working itself out in the world of sense. Those who opposed and resisted the lonely thinker were instinctively conscious that with this rejuvenated independent nature-philosophy something is making its appearance which is dangerous to the optimism and ethics of their world-view. This is the reason why in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries every one united to oppose Spinoza's philosophy. Contemporary thinkers were especially alarmed about the position of optimism. The fearful earthquake which destroyed Lisbon in 1755 awoke the general question amongst ordinary people whether the world is really governed by a wise and kindly creator? Voltaire, Kant and many other thinkers of the time even took this catastrophe as a text, sometimes confessing their own insufficiency, sometimes attempting to find ways in which optimism could still be saved.

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How little optimism and ethics have to expect from real nature-philosophy is shown not only in the work of Spinoza, but also in that of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716).¹ In his *Théodicée* (1710), he tries to reconcile his philosophy with the optimistic world-view, and in doing so he is greatly helped by the fact that his nature-philosophy is more living and more supple and malleable than that of Spinoza. He is also himself determined to bring all his skill into play in order to secure an optimistic meaning for reality. And yet at the end he gets no further than the wearisome reiteration of the axiom that the actually existing world is the best of any which could be conceived as generally possible.

All the same, what he saves of optimism is useless for

¹ G. W. Leibniz: *Système nouveau de la nature et de la communication des substances* (1695); *Nouveaux Essais* (1704); *La Monadologie* (1714).

**LEIBNIZ: OPTIMISTIC-ETHICAL WORLD-VIEW SIDE BY SIDE
WITH NATURE-PHILOSOPHY**

the world-view because it contains no energies possessing ethical activity directed toward the objective world. Wherever he is self-consistent Leibniz remains caught in the toils of nature-philosophy just as much as Spinoza. All the difficulties in which Spinoza's determinist nature-philosophy is involved when it tries to produce an ethic are also present in that of Leibniz. It is true that his nature-philosophy corresponds to the manifold objective reality much better than that of Spinoza, in that he does not base the unity of thought (spirit) and extension (matter) in the absolute, but makes this unity realize itself in innumerable atoms whose individualities in their totality constitute the universe—he calls them *monads*. In many respects he anticipates modern physical science, with its doctrine of cells and atoms. But even he is still under the ban laid on him by the Cartesian method of stating the problem. He does not allow the individualities in which thought and extension are combined to enter into living relationship with one another, but he limits their existence to that of forces gifted with imagination. Their essential nature is to consist only of this, that each independently of the others is more or less clearly conscious of the universe.

With Spinoza there is a possibility of attaining an ethic in that the attempt can be undertaken to give an ethical interpretation to the mystical relation of man to the absolute. But Leibniz has barricaded this path for himself because he will not recognize such an abstract absolute as the central content of the universe. And therefore the fact that nowhere does he give us any penetrative ethical teaching during the whole course of his argument is not a matter of chance. There can never be any sort of foundation for ethics in his nature-philosophy. But instead of admitting this result and giving up the problem of the relation of ethics and nature-philosophy, he weaves traditional ethical epigrams into his system and defines the good as love to God and to men. In nature-philosophy Leibniz is greater than Spinoza because he pays more attention to

the living reality than does his compeer. But in his struggle to attain a real and accurate view of the world he is far behind the other, because Spinoza, grasping deeper into the elemental nature of things than he, recognizes the anti-thesis between ethics and nature-philosophy as the central problem of his world-view and makes an attempt to solve it. Had he been consistent with himself Leibniz would have been obliged to bring up in atheism, as does the Indian Sankhya philosophy, which similarly makes the world consist of a manifold of eternal individualities. But, instead of this, he inserts a theistic idea of God into his nature-philosophy in order to retain a satisfactory world-view. He makes his philosophy acceptable to the eighteenth century because it uses optimistic-ethical and theistic phraseology. Through Christian Wolff (1679-1754) the Leibnizian philosophy, popularized almost out of recognition, helped to found German rationalism. But through this treachery of his, according to the most enlightened view, against nature-philosophy, it was yet impossible for Leibniz to prevent what actually happened, namely, that his work weakened the power of nature-philosophy during that period. Against his will he helped Spinoza to come into his kingdom.

But for the spirit of the time to enter on the path of real nature-philosophy is a step into the dangerous unknown. And therefore it guards itself against this as long as it can. In the long run, however, since the work of Kant and that of Spinoza combined to bring the optimistic-ethical world-view, constructed on the actual objective world and now thoroughly at home there, into a state of dangerous instability, the spirit of the time was obliged to make up its mind to demolish the building and to attempt to comprehend optimism and ethics by a process of direct reflection about the essential being of the world. For the accomplishment of this plan German speculative philosophy offered itself as an instrument.

CHAPTER XI

'ETHICS AND OPTIMISM IN J. G. FICHTE'S SPECULATIVE WORLD-VIEW

What is the speculative philosophy? Its relation to Gnosticism. Fichte's speculative foundation for ethics and optimism. The necessarily incomplete nature of the Fichtean activist mysticism —Influence of Fichte.

The speculative philosophy dreams of an optimistic-ethical world-view which gushes out as a sudden intuition. It wants to discover the meaning of the world in the most direct and immediate ways. It will not stop to analyse the phenomena of the universe in order to draw thence a conclusion as to its real essence. Instead of the inductive it adopts the deductive method. It tries to reconstruct for itself by a process of pure and abstract thought the way in which the world of objective actuality has developed from the original idea of being. It is, in fact, a fantastic nature-philosophy in logical garb. Its claim to deal thus with the world leads the speculative thought away from the data of epistemology. Accordingly the world as we see it is more or less a concept of our own imagination. We are in some sort creative partakers in its objective state. Thus the logic which rules in the final ego is to be comprehended as a product of that which is at work in the Absolute. And so the individual is capable of discovering in his own thought the impulse and the process of the emanation of the empirical world from the Idea of Being. Speculation, that is to say, constructive logic, is the key to the secret door which leads to knowledge of the world. In its way the German speculative philosophy is essentially related to the oriental Greek Gnosticism which during the first centuries of the Christian era constructed systems to explain the

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origin of the world of sense from Pure Being.¹ The systems of Gnosticism are out to find a foundation for the redemptive world-view. Their keystone is the question as to how the spiritual individualities which exist in the material world have come to be there, and how they may get back again into the world of pure being. In contradistinction to this, German speculative philosophy is out to obtain such a knowledge of the world as may give a meaning to the active existence of spiritual individualities in it. Speculative thought at the beginning of the Christian era is dualist and pessimistic. At the beginning of the nineteenth century it is monist and optimistic. The method by which a world-view is to be obtained is the same in both periods.

Amongst the protagonists of the speculative philosophy are especially notable Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775-1854), and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). But only Fichte and Hegel produced world-views definitely stamped with their characteristic personalities. Schelling remains stuck fast in the bog of nature-philosophy, and stands almost completely aside from the struggle for an optimistic-ethical world-view which was going on at the time. His thought, in a constant state of flux, takes all possible standpoints one after another, revolves now around one more nearly that of natural science, now around one more Spinozist, now around one more Christian. It never makes a consciously purposive attempt to find a foundation for ethics.

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¹ The most important representatives of Gnosticism are Basilides, Valentinus and Marcion. All three lived in the first half of the second century A.D. At the beginning of that century Gnostic systems were shooting up on all sides, as speculative systems were at the beginning of the nineteenth. The two great Alexandrian church teachers, Flavius Clemens at the end of the second century A.D., and Origen at the beginning of the third, attempt to bring Gnostic speculation into harmony with the doctrines of the church.

FICHTE'S SPECULATIVE FOUNDATION FOR ETHICS AND OPTIMISM

Fichte begins as the very antithesis of Spinoza.¹ He tries to wring a clear confession of ethical optimism from the universe by working out Kant's thought to completion. He, however, followed Kant in the error of not bringing the latter's two discoveries, his epistemological idealism and the ethic of the categorical imperative, into that intimate and implicit connection with each other in which they really stand. What is the meaning of the fact that the moral law and the world of sense are both present in me? This is the starting point of Fichte's philosophizing. Through the action of the categorical imperative I find as a matter of experience that my own ego is, by virtue of its nature, a will designed to realize itself in action. Correspondingly every "thing in itself" which I deduce behind a phenomenon as the actuality which underlies it, is a similar will. And, finally, the essential being of the Infinite can consist in nothing else. The universe is thus the phenomenal form of an infinite will whose nature compels it to realize itself in action. But why does the absolute Ego appear in a world of sense? Why is Existence revealed to us as Becoming? If I understand this, I have grasped the meaning of the world and of my own life.

Just because it is infinite will-to-action, the absolute Ego cannot remain simple Ego. It sets up a Non-Ego as a barrier to its own being in order to gradually overcome it and thus to become conscious of itself as will-to-action. This process works itself out in the manifold of the infinite rational being. In the wealth of phenomena which pertains to this manifold the world of sense comes into being. The attainment of mastery over this world they recognize as a duty which springs up secretly in them and binds them in close relationship to the world spirit. This is the meaning of the identity philosophy of Ego and Non-Ego.

Thus it is not only true that the world exists only in my

¹ J. G. Fichte: *Grundlage der gesammten Wissenschaftslehre* (1794); *Das System der Sittenlehre nach den Prinzipien der Wissenschaftslehre* (1798); *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* (1800); *Anweisungen zum seligen Leben* (1806).

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conception of it ; the very idea of it only exists in me so that I may possess something on which my will may exercise itself in the fulfilment of its duty. The phenomena of becoming and decay, which I project out of my own consciousness, exist only so that I may comprehend myself in them as an ethical being. In this way epistemological Idealism and the categorical imperative are able, as long as they work together and each one stands on the other's shoulders, to peep behind the curtain of the world's secret.

Kant guards himself against the possibility that Fichte's system should be the completion of his own philosophy. But, as a matter of fact, this system does develop in a genial fashion the lines on which the Critiques, both of Pure and of Practical Reason, are planned, and thinks out the thoughts of the Königsberg philosopher to an affirmative world-view which is explicit in them. In the *Destiny of the Human Race*, of 1800, Fichte sets out this world-view in a popularly comprehensible form. This book belongs to the most important documents of the period of struggle for an ethical world-view. Fichte gives a content to the abstract "absolute duty" of Kant. He states plainly that to man, as an instrument of the eternally active ego, belongs the destiny to work together with that ego in order "to bring the whole world of sense under the lordship of reason".

It is because his fundamental principle of the moral possesses content that Fichte can deduce individual postulates from it. But his detailed doctrine of duty has a lifeless air in consequence of the too general content of the said fundamental principle.

Nothing more can really be derived from it except the demand that man ought under all circumstances of life to fulfil the duties which are revealed to him from time to time as part of his determined destiny to be an instrument for the realization of the mastery of reason over nature. Thus Fichte distinguishes the general duties which are obligatory on a man as such and the special duties which fall to his lot as a result of his particular abilities, his station in life, and

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his calling or profession. A special value is attributed to the latter class of duties. In that he defines the ethical as activity directed to the subordination of the world of sense by reason Fichte presents a utilitarian ethic of rationalism in the guise of a cosmical formula and thus affords us a profound and comprehensive basis for the ethical enthusiasm current in his time. In this way also he carries out the plan adumbrated by Kant.

In so doing he comes into conflict with the representatives of the popular philosophy of the *Aufklarung*. He fell foul of C. F. Nicolai in a controversial pamphlet on this point but actually all the reproach he has to bring against him is that he wants to bring ethics and faith-in-progress into further subordination to the naive world-view of the healthy human understanding instead of taking them both as a product of that which results from the union of epistemological idealism and the ethic of the categorical imperative. The lingering in an incomplete rationalism after a completed system had been foreshadowed by Kant and realized by himself appears to him to be a crime against truth. The beginning of wisdom is, according to him, insight into the paradox "that the consciousness of the actual world arises from the need for action and not the need for action from consciousness of the world".

The spirit of Fichte's world-view is throughout that of rationalism, only that in him rationalism thinks that it has really comprehended the essence of Being and now marches on with still greater conviction and still more flaming enthusiasm. In Fichte men are expressly urged on to work for the improvement of the world. With powerful pathos he teaches them of that inward voice which stirs them up to action and gives them their appointed duty in every particular circumstance of their existence, and which is to be recognized and obeyed so that thus they may fulfil the highest, the unique, destiny of their lives. From the inner impulse to action we derive the desire for a better world than the one which we see around us. Faith in such a

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world is the food by which we live. Fichte confesses to an unlimited optimism. "All those outbreaks of crude power before which human might dwindles into a mere nothing, those devastating hurricanes, those earthquakes, those eruptions, can be nothing else than the last struggle of the wild forces of chaos against the regularly advancing, vivifying, and purposive progress with which they are forced to conform contrary to their own interest . . . nature is destined to become always more transparent and more comprehensible to us until we penetrate its innermost secrets, and human power enlightened and furnished with weapons by its own inventions will inevitably rule nature, and peacefully maintain its conquests once they have been secured."¹ Here Fichte gives us the Triumphal Song of faith in progress. And this is the faith in virtue of which the spirit of modernity had worked since the Renaissance ; a spirit which drew its life from objective evidence of material progress in knowledge and power. He is convinced, like the most ingenuous rationalist, that nature resembles an obstinately refractory bullock which yet will eventually be brought under the yoke.

That humanity will come to perfection and reach a position of eternal peace is to him just as certain as that nature will one day do the same. It is true that we are still in the period of stagnation and of occasional retrogressions, but when this is once overcome then "every useful improvement which may have come into existence at one end of the world will be immediately known to and partaken of by all, then humanity will be raised by the power exerted by all in common, and at one stride, to a state of development and organization which will remain uninterrupted, without stagnation or retrogression, and of which we have at present no idea whatever".

Fichte attributes to the State in his early writings a rôle of very slight significance, but in his later writings a very large one. In the *Grundlage des Naturrechts* (1796) the

¹ This and the following quotation are taken from the *Bestimmung des Menschen*.

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State* is to him only that which secures law and order. In the work which appeared in 1800, *Der geschlossene Handelsstaat*, he allows it to organize labour and to undertake social duties. In the *Reden an die deutsche Nation* (1808) he makes it into a moral educator and protector of humanity. The man who has won through to the higher rationalism with the help of epistemological idealism cannot doubt about his optimism even amidst the most disastrous experiences. He has indeed comprehended that the world of sense is but the barrier which the ceaselessly active will has created for itself in order to overcome it. This affords him an inner independence in the face of all happenings. He does not need to understand it in every individual case. He can let much of it remain enigmatic for ultimate solution by his eternal spirit. He grasps the essential point, that is, that the real and enduring part of the world is spirit, not matter.

Partaking in the eternally active Spirit, man is exalted over the world and is himself eternal. The sorrows and troubles which he encounters only affect the nature "with which he is connected in an inscrutable fashion", but not his real self which is a being superior to everything natural. He has no fear of death. For, in fact, he does not really die from his own point of view, but only from that of those who remain behind. "All death in nature is birth . . . nature is, throughout, life, exuberant life. It is not death that kills. Rather is it the vital life which, hidden behind the old one, now begins and unfolds itself. Death and birth are merely the struggle of life with itself in order to find ever clearer expression and to become ever more like its essential self." In similar words the Chinese monist Chüang-tzü expresses his belief that life is eternal by its own nature and that the death of individuals merely signifies that one existence has been poured out into another.

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Fichte's philosophy of the absolute activity is the expres-

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sion of his strong ethical personality which grasps at problems with an impetuous and lavish outpouring of energy, and exhausts itself in so doing. But even he is not able to really unite epistemological and ethical idealism in one intellectually inevitable ethical world-view. The impossibility of the undertaking becomes evident in every direction.

In order to understand ethics as related to and part of the world-process, Fichte gives up (like all those who make this attempt) the possibility of differentiating human action from world-processes. The impulse to activity, he says, which is given by the world-spirit, expresses itself in man as will-to-ethical-action, but the whole world is really full of this blazing will which demands activity against the barriers imposed by itself. All happening is indeed but an expression of this same principle. What is then the distinction between natural and ethical happenings; between activity in itself and ethical activity? Fichte decides that purposive action, directed with knowledge and will toward the subordination of the world of sense to reason, is ethical. What does this mean if one looks at it closely? That the eternal Spirit becomes moral in that it enters on and earnestly takes up its own game, that is, the overcoming of limits created by itself. Thus we find revealed in Fichte the fact that the ethical has really no longer any meaning in the world-view which results in the combination of ethical and epistemological idealism.

And what is meant by the expression "to bring the total world of sense under the lordship of reason"? Not only is this idea of the ethical too extended, but also it still remains fantastic. In a contracted sense man has the ability to make the powers of nature his servants, an ability which according to Fichte one may, nay, is almost obliged to, term not only a purposive, but also an ethical action in the widest sense. He has some "influence" on the earth, but none on the world. That he gives names to the mighty stars and calculates the orbits of many cannot be taken to

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imply that he brings them under the mastery of reason. Even on the living beings of the ocean depths he exerts no other influence beyond the fact that he catches some of them and gives them names.

In order that he may maintain an ethical world-purpose Fichte falsifies a birth certificate of the world and gives it the categorical imperative as a father and epistemological idealism as a mother; but this does not help him at all. The ethical world-purpose which he evolves in this way cannot satisfy ethical thought. In comprehending the eternal spirit of which the finite spirit partakes as will-to-action, Fichte aims at making possible an ethical and affirmative world-view. In reality, however, he only attains thereby to an enhanced attitude of affirmation which he, by smuggling in the idea of duty through a process of speculative thought, gives out as ethical. His fate is the same as that of the Chinese nature philosophers, who also weary themselves in a vain effort to manufacture an ethic from the materials of an affirmative attitude to the world and to life. Activist progress upward into the absolute, according to Fichte, releases mighty forces. But just like its contrary, namely, that progress up into the absolute which comes to pass by a process of thought, it is not ethical but supra-ethical. That which is lacking to the mysticism of progress into the absolute, and without which it cannot be ethical mysticism, can be reached neither through enhancement nor through depression of will-to-action. The activist mysticism of Fichte, in which man lets off his energies in the world, has relations with the ethic of action, just as the intellectual mysticism of Spinoza, in which man loses his own individuality by absorption in the objective world, has with the ethic of self-perfection, but neither of these are patient of complete development into a real ethic. The ascent into the absolute which takes place in an act of thought is really nearer to nature-philosophy than that which fulfils itself in an actual deed.

The Buddha, the Brāhmans, Lao-tzü, Chuang-tzü,

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Spinoza, and the mystics of all ages, have experienced union with the Infinite as a coming-to-rest in It. Fichte's mysticism of action lies more in the road of dualistic thought than in that of real nature-philosophy. It is, to some extent, under the influence of enthusiasm. Fichte devotes himself to it and is right in doing so, because he has the feeling that the interests of activist ethics are better secured in it than in the other. But since he has entered on the path of nature-philosophy he is drawn in more and more into its naturally quietist consequences, in spite of the fact that he is obsessed by the ideals of an activist ethic. He goes through a process of evolution in which he draws near to the world-view of Spinoza. In the *Anweisung zum seligen Leben* (Guide to the Blessed Life) (1806), which appeared six years after the *Bestimmung des Menschen* (Man's Destiny), no longer the ethical, but the religious element, seems to him the highest. The final meaning of life, he now recognizes, is not to act in God but to rest in God. He says, "self-annihilation is itself entrance into the higher life".¹

Indeed, he thinks that thus he only makes his world-view more profound, without taking away from—or in any way weakening—its ethical energy. He himself remained right up to the end the fiery spirit which lavishes itself in activity for the progress of the world ; but his thought has weakened under the weight of nature-philosophy. Without consciously confessing it, he yet recognizes that only a spiritual and not an ethical meaning of life and of the world can ever emanate from nature-philosophy. Spinoza surely looks at him with a smile as he withdraws himself to realms of thought which nature-philosophy can never reach or control.

Fichte declared it to be a first principle of philosophy that only that world-view is ethical which makes an enthusiastic activist self-sacrifice for the universe comprehensible for man as being itself something founded in the essential

¹ *Anweisung zum seligen Leben.*

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nature of the world and of life. But the path which he follows, when he begins to develop this thought, leads him astray. Instead of investigating more deeply the question of how it is that ethical action is something which comes from the spirit of the world and is directed toward the world, and yet is differentiated from purely physical action, as one really trying to find a ground for this difference, he carries on the attempt, initiated by Kant, to characterize the ethical world-view, with the help of epistemological idealism, as a necessity for thought. Many of his contemporaries believed with him that this world-view had in that way really been established as supreme. Those, too, who were not able to agree completely with the deeper meaning of the philosophy of Ego and Non-Ego, were powerfully influenced by the forces of the ethical personality which expressed itself in Fichte's writing.

The immediate effect of Fichte's philosophy was thus that the optimistic-ethical element in rationalism was maintained, strengthened and deepened. A great wave of enthusiasm for ethics and civilization issued from the group thus inspired. But the vessel on which he embarked with his followers, and in which he set sail on the sea of knowledge before a noble and favouring wind, was unsound. Shipwreck was only a question of time. It is one of Fichte's illusions that he thinks he has derived from the essential being of the universe the vital necessity which impels him to ethical duty and to ethical activity, and which he experiences as present in himself. But yet in the very way in which he tackles the problem of the optimistic-ethical world-view, and perceives that our usual methods do not help us to its solution, and that thus, whatever their value, they must ultimately be abandoned—in this, I say, he reveals himself as a really great thinker.

CHAPTER XII

SCHILLER, GOETHE AND SCHLEIERMACHER.

Schiller's ethical and Goethe's nature-philosophy world-view. Schleiermacher's attempt to give an ethical turn to Spinozist nature-philosophy.

IT is extremely significant that the optimistic-ethical world-view of Kant and Fichte finds in Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805) a protagonist who popularizes it through his gift of poetic expression. Schiller, himself philosophically inclined, goes farther than this and undertakes to develop and build on the work of his inspirers. He aims at broadening the ethical into the æsthetic by laying bare its real foundation.

In the *Letters about the Ästhetic Education of Man* (1795) he suggests that art and ethics belong together in so far as in both the man himself attains a free and creative relation to the world of sense. “Thus the transition from the passive position of perception to the active state of thinking and willing only takes place through a mediate state of æsthetic freedom . . . there is no other way to make the perceptive man rational, except that of first making him æsthetic.” Schiller does not go on to demonstrate more in detail how the capability for freedom formed in man by æsthetic experience actually disposes him to moral action. His work, in spite of all the attention which it has received and deserves, is rather rhetorical than practical. He has not plumbed the depths of the problem of the relation between the æsthetic and the ethical. To Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), in opposition to Schiller's view, the world-view of the deeper rationalism is almost as unacceptable as is that of ordinary rationalism in general. It is impossible, he feels, to partake the confidence with

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which the men around him look on optimistic and ethical convictions as securely founded. What separates him from Kant, Fichte and Schiller is his awe in the face of the objective reality of nature. For him nature is something self-existent, not merely something with an existence relative to and dependent on, our own. He does not demand from nature that she should fit absolutely into our optimistic-ethical views. He does not claim to master nature either by epistemological and ethical idealism or by pretentious speculation, but lives in her as a man who gazes with wonder on the world of being and knows not how to bring his own relation to the world-spirit within the bounds of any formula.

Descartes led modern philosophy into error by his division of the world into extended and thinking beings, and denied to both equally the possibility of influencing each other. In succession to him thinkers brood over the problem of the two kinds of beings parallel to each other, and try to comprehend the world in formulæ. That the world is, and that life itself is, the riddle of riddles, is a thought outside their ken. Thus all their philosophizing misses the really important point. It was because Descartes had preceded them that the two great spirits of nature-philosophy, Spinoza and Leibniz, only produced more or less lifeless systems. And it is because of their Cartesian prepossessions that Kant and Fichte renounce all attempts to philosophize about the actual objective world.

Thus Descartes and ethical faith in progress unite in a common under-valuation of nature. Both of them miss the point that nature is alive and has an existence in her own right. When Goethe dares to say that he knows nothing about philosophy his meaning is just exactly that he cannot agree with Descartes and the moderns in this fallacy. His greatness lies in the fact that he has the courage to remain elemental in a period of complicated abstract and speculative thought. Overwhelmed by his

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sense of the enigmatic objective life in nature he hesitates in a view of the world at once grand and incomplete. As an investigator he is indefatigable in research, but he always emerges with a question on his lips. He strives to think optimistically. Shaftesbury's thoughts have magic attraction for him also. But he cannot attune himself to the optimism which sounds so loudly all around him. World- and life-affirmation is not so simple for him as it is for Fichte and Schiller. He strives earnestly to reach an ethical view of the world, but confesses that he cannot do so. Therefore he does not dare to find a meaning in nature. But in life he does. And he seeks it by defining life as an activity which possesses an intrinsic value in itself. To him it is an inner necessity to subordinate the activist world-view to nature-philosophy. In *Faust* he expresses the conviction that action gives the only real satisfaction attainable in life, and that thus in it lies the secret meaning of existence ; and he expresses it as a conviction to which he has attained as a result of conflict during his journey through life, and that he intends to hold fast, without fully understanding it. Goethe struggles to comprehend what ethical action really is ; but he cannot succeed, because nature-philosophy is unable to provide him with any ethical criterion. What it denies to the Chinese monists and to Spinoza it cannot offer to him. The true meaning of this world-view of Goethe, with its dependence on actual reality, remained hidden from his contemporaries. Its incompleteness alienated and irritated them. They failed to understand a theory of the world and of life which could not be wrought into a system, but remained fixed in objective realities ; rather they stand by optimism and by ethics.

* * *

• Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834)¹ takes up a

¹ D. E. Schleiermacher : *Reden über die Religion an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (1799) ; *Monologen* (1800) ; *Grundlinien einer Kritik der bisherigen Sittenlehre* (1803) ; *Der christliche Glaube* (1821-23) ; *Entwurf eines Systems der Sittenlehre* (posth., 1835).

SCHLEIERMACHER'S ATTEMPT TO GIVE AN ETHICAL TURN TO SPINOZIST NATURE-PHILOSOPHY

position of antagonism to both the ordinary and the more profound rationalism, because he never frees himself from the influence of Spinoza. His life work was aimed at presenting Spinozist nature-philosophy in the guise of ethics and of Christian religion, so far as that was possible. Thus it happens that he clothes it in the garments of either one or the other. Current ethical thought, according to Schleiermacher, presents man as an ethical individual wandering the earth, whose duty is to improve the conditions of living thereon. Existing thus in an atmosphere of enthusiasm, he is in danger of losing control of himself and becoming impersonal. He forgets that it is his first duty to be clear about his own essential nature, to look into himself, and from a human entity to become a personality.

This deviation from the activist enthusiasm of rationalism comes to view in the monologues, those noble introspections for the first New Year's Day of the nineteenth century. In them one seems to hear Lao-tzu and Chüang-tzu declaiming against the moralism and fanaticism for progress of Confucius. According to Schleiermacher the first task of man is to live in unity with the Infinite and to view the world as in that Infinite. Only that which, in the shape of action, results from such a union, has really a meaning and a moral significance. Spinoza's ethic consisted in practising self-control to the highest degree, and in living one's life rather in the realm of pure thought than as a physical being. Schleiermacher's ethic travels along the same road, only that he tries to combine with it a more comprehensive interest for the objective world than is present in Spinoza. And in this he is helped by his faith in immanent progress. We have, he says, to realize no other sort of perfection than that which is already implicit in things. Thus ethics is not an arbitrary setting up of laws; rather is it a recognition and a description of the tendencies toward perfection which appear in the world itself, and a line of conduct in accordance with these. Moral law is not distinguishable from

natural law, and has exactly the same ends. It is only natural law coming to full consciousness of itself in man.

For Schleiermacher, then, the essential thing is not, as it is for Fichte, to bring the universe under the control of reason, but only to assist, in the realm of human activity, the unity of nature and reason which, implicit in the universe, struggles to realize itself. "All ethical knowledge is an expression of reason in the process of becoming part of nature, a process of which we never see the beginning, and of which the end is equally hidden from us."¹ Ethics is an "intuitive science". It revolves around the two poles of natural science and human history.

The ethic which results from this fundamental conception is, like that of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu, so whittled down that there is really no more effective power left in it. It plays only a subordinate rôle, however much Schleiermacher may try to conceal this fact by his extraordinarily skilful method of presentation. What really gives its meaning to human existence is something which has no effective power, namely, unity with the Infinite experienced in feeling. Schleiermacher's ethic is superior to that of Spinoza in ingenious dialectic, but not in reality. His world-view is that of Spinoza only that it is reached through faith in immanent progress. Thus he paints his ethic in somewhat lively colours.

In this way vital nature-philosophy in Goethe, and Spinozist nature-philosophy in Schleiermacher, undermined the ground on which the men of enthusiastic and optimistic-ethical thought who belonged to the beginning of the nineteenth century, were standing. Most people took no account of these dangerous tendencies. They gazed open-mouthed at the fireworks which Kant and Fichte were letting off, and in praise of which Schiller was declaiming verses, and even as they watched a burst of rockets went up in a blaze of extraordinary brilliancy. The master pyrotechnist, Hegel, had come on the scene.

¹ *Entwurf eines Systems. . . Par. 83.*

CHAPTER XIII

HEGEL'S SUPRA-ETHICAL OPTIMISTIC WORLD-VIEW

The ethic contained in Hegel's philosophy of nature and history. Hegel's supra-ethical world-view. Its relation to that of the Brähmans. His faith in progress.

In his speculative philosophy Fichte was interested most of all in ethics. Hegel, deeper and more objective than he, is interested first of all in truth.¹ He attempts to discover the real meaning of existence with the aid of the data which are given in objective reality. Therefore he cannot follow Fichte in the *tour de force* derived by the latter from ethics, that of making the world the child of the categorical imperative as father and epistemological idealism as mother. Before he will begin to make out a birth certificate for the world he undertakes pertinent investigations. He studies the laws of objective occurrences as they come to light in history. He then makes these the foundation of a constructive system which is to explain the origin of the world from the notion of being. His philosophy is thus the history of philosophy become cosmic. The building, in so far as it is possible to estimate it, is solidly put together. Therefore his work is convincing also in the places where its lines run off into the Infinite.

But what is it that Hegel discovers to be the root principle governing the course of history? It is that everything which is going on is in a state of natural progress, and that this progress works itself out in the appearance in a chain of successive antitheses, and in the reconciling syntheses which invariably follow these. In the processes of thought, as in those of events, every thesis provokes an antithesis.

¹ Friedrich Hegel: *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807); *Wissenschaft der Logik* (3 vols., 1812-26); *Encyclopädie des phys. Wiss.* (1817); *Philosophie des Rechts* (1821); *Philosophie der Geschichte* (posth., 1840); *Collected Works* in eighteen volumes arranged by his pupils (1832-45).

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Next, both unite in a synthesis which contains what is valuable in both the opposing members. Every synthesis as it is reached, becomes again a thesis for a fresh antithesis. Then again, a new synthesis arises from the two, and so on eternally.

Hegel is able to justify the course of history to himself by means of this scheme, and at the same time to develop the fundamental principles of logic from it. Therefore he is sure that it must be possible along the same lines to understand how it is that the world of ideas, developed logically from the notion of being, passes over into the world of objective reality. He develops this phantasy in such a splendid and satisfying manner that even we, who are proof against his magic potions, can easily see how it was that people were intoxicated by them.

Whilst Fichte seeks to give an ethical significance to the expansion of pure being into the world of actuality, Hegel goes back at the very beginning to the assertion that in the last resort the meaning of the world can only be spiritual. In bringing a world to birth the Absolute has no other intention than to become conscious of itself. It is, in truth, an eternally creative spirit, but it is not so in order, as Fichte says, to be eternally in action, but rather so that it may withdraw back into itself by way of its own creations.

In nature the Absolute takes account of itself, but in a dim uncertain way. It is only in man that it really becomes conscious of itself—and that in a triply graded ascent. In the man who is only occupied with himself and nature the Absolute is still a subjective spirit. In the common spirit of men who unite together for the legal and ethical organizing of human society the Absolute expands itself into an objective spirit, and at the same time shows itself capable of creative power on the ground of the ideas inherent in this spirit. In art, in religion, and in philosophy, it becomes conscious of itself as an absolute spirit existing in and for itself, and which has overcome the antithesis of subject and object, of thinking and being. In art it gazes on itself as such ; in religious devotion it stands before itself as such :

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in philosophy, in pure thought, it comprehends itself as such. When the world is comprehended in thought the Absolute experiences itself in the act.

Before the fate to which Spinoza smilingly resigns himself, and against which Fichte and Schleiermacher contend, Hegel bows himself in courageous awe as being the Very Truth. His world-view is supra-ethical mysticism. The ethical is to him but a phase in the development of the spiritual. Civilization he comprehends not as something ethical, but only as something spiritual.

To show that the moral is nothing in itself, but is only a phenomenon of spirituality, Hegel appeals to the French use of language. "The moral", he says, "must be taken in the broadest sense, in which it signifies not merely the moral but good itself." *Le morale* in the French language is opposed to *le physique*, and signifies the spiritual, in general the intellectual.¹

The idea of the ethical with which Hegel works is an extraordinarily broad one. It consists in this, "that the will does not have subjective, that is, selfish, interests, as its aim, but a general content."² It is the business of thought to set out this general content in its individual details.

If Hegel had followed out to its roots the fact that the will of the individual is designed to devote itself to general ends, and had felt it as the enigmatic and inscrutable fact that it is, he would not have been able to pass so easily over the ethical problem as he does. He would have been obliged to confess to himself that the Spiritual Nature which makes itself known in the ethical is unique and cannot be classified amongst any still higher influences, much less subordinated to any one of them. The problem of the mutual relations of spirituality and morality would then have been set out for solution.

But Hegel is so concerned to house his speculative optimistic world-view safely that he does not give a direct

¹ *Encykl.*, 3rd part, ed. 1841, p. 386.

² *Encykl. d. pbil. Wiss.*

value in itself to the origin of the ethical impulse in man, but simply attributes to it an indirect value as a phenomenon caused by the welling up of the super-individual spirit which underlies all individual existences. Instead of directing his thought to the question of how the individual spirit in the detached personality can be at the same time super-individual, and can thus become conscious of its unity with the Absolute, Hegel goes on to explain the higher experience of the detached individual spirit as a product of its mutual relations with the universal collective spirit. He calls it presumption that the individual spirit as such should seek to comprehend its relation to the universe, as is the case in Indian thought. The becoming one with the Absolute is the experience of the general collective spirit in its highest degree of insight. It is only when the individual stands in close connection with this, as the river does with the waters of the lake through which it flows, that he can partake this experience of the Absolute. This is the fatal turning aside into the general and supra-personal in which Hegel's philosophy goes astray and loses itself.

Thus at bottom ethics with Hegel only signifies something which makes possible the coming into being of a society in whose collective spirit the Absolute spirit may become conscious of itself. Man is moral in so far as he freely subordinates himself to the demands which society recognizes as desirable with a view to the creation of a higher spirituality.

There is no individual ethic in Hegel. He did not busy himself with the profound problems of ethical self-perfection and the relation of man to his fellow-men. When he comes to speak of ethics he immediately begins to treat of the family, of society, and of the State. With Bentham ethics enlarges the scope of law. Hegel interweaves the two. It is noteworthy that he wrote no work on ethics. His disquisitions on ethics are to be found in his *Philosophy of Law*.

Before all, he is concerned to show that the State, according to the true notion of it, is not only a legal, but also, and still more, a legal-ethical, entity. Fichte had made it an ethical educator of individuals. For Hegel it is the inner

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idea of every ethical event, the "self-conscious moral substance", as he expresses it. The real value of the moral actualizes itself in and through the State. This over-valuation of the State is a natural result of the under-valuation of the spiritual significance of individuality as such.

* * *

Hegel cannot assent to the thought of Fichte that ethics has a cosmical foundation because the subjugation of the world by reason is its ultimate content. His feeling for reality does not allow him to indulge in such phantasies, but the fact that he gives up the cosmical idea of ethics in general is fateful. He offers us an *a priori* ethic instead of ethics and nature-philosophy combined in speculative thought and mutually explaining each other. He does not allow us to comprehend it as the relation of the individual toward the objective universe, a method which Spinoza, Fichte and Schleiermacher permit us to attempt. It is also forbidden him to interpret the ethical, as do the Chinese monists, as conduct in consonance with the universe. His ethics is crude and twisted into a mere norm for the regulation of the relations between the individual and the community.

Never is it allowed to take part, as a formative idea, in the creation of a world-view based on nature-philosophy. It is built into the wall as a ready-shaped stone. In that Hegel gives to ethics only the significance of a ready-made motive for the objective actualization of the spiritual meaning of the world, his teaching has a remarkable analogy to that of Brähmanism. Hegel and the Brähmans belong together because they dare to admit as logical thinkers, that thought about the world and the Absolute which lies behind the world can only lead to a spiritual and not to an ethical interpretation of the unity of the finite with the Infinite spirit, and that, therefore, ethics can never become anything more than an impulse leading up to this. With the Brähman ethics prepares the individual for the intellectual act

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in which he experiences the Absolute in himself and dies to himself in it. With Hegel ethics helps to produce that type of society in the common spirit of which alone the Absolute becomes capable of experiencing itself. It is but a relative distinction to say that Brāhmanism thinks out its intellectual mysticism from an individualist and negative point of view, whilst Hegel works his out from an affirmative standpoint and only brings in the intellectual act when a community has produced the desiderated spirituality. The inner similarity of both world-views is not affected by this criticism. One is the complement of the other. Both give a secondary valuation to ethics as merely a phase of spirituality.

As with the Brāhmans so with Hegel, ethics is subordinate, but it is not demonstrably determined with him. With them, in the last resort, the only things decisive for the attainment of consciousness of union with the Absolute are progress in a negative attitude toward the world and life, and profundity of meditation. With Hegel the community, which is to create the spiritual atmosphere in which the Absolute spirit eternally experiences itself, could come into being just as well by means of law alone as by a combination of law and ethics. His ethics is, indeed, only a variety of law.

With the Brāhmans ethic is but a deeper tinge of colour which affects a certain area of the general negation ; with Hegel it is a quite similar phenomenon on the surface of affirmation. In itself the world-view of Hegel is a supra-ethical mysticism attached to an affirmative attitude toward the world, just as that of the Brāhmans is a supra-ethical mysticism of world-negation. That it is this and nothing else Hegel confessed in a fit of brutal candour in which, on the 25th June, 1820, he wrote the famous preface to the *Rechtsphilosophie*. He here declares that we are not to manipulate reality to accord with the ideals which have originated in our own minds, but only to listen to the way in which the actual world affirms itself to itself, and affirms us in itself, in its immanent impulse toward progress. "Whatever is rational is real, and whatever is real is

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rational." The eternal which is present in temporal and ephemeral phenomena, and develops itself in them—the important thing for us is to recognize *that*, and to become reconciled with reality by its means. It is not the business of philosophy to formulate ideas of what ought to be. Its task is to comprehend what is. It creates no new age, but is only "its own age conceived in thought". Philosophy always comes too late to be a body of normative teaching about what the world ought to be. It only begins to speak after reality has completed its evolutionary process. "Minerva's owl only starts on her flight amid the falling shadows." A true estimate of reality will produce a benevolently peaceful attitude in us.

Rationalism is ethical belief in progress combined with ethical will-to-progress. It was as being such that Kant and Fichte sought to give it a firmer basis. Worked over again by Hegel it still remained nothing more than faith in progress . . . faith, that is, in immanent progress. This was all that that powerful speculative thinker imagined himself able to establish. At this point he has affinities with Schleiermacher, and indeed, when reduced to their final expressions, the world-views of these two philosophers do not differ very widely. The secret feud which existed between them during their life-time had really no objective background. The real bearing of the strategic retreat undertaken by Hegel was hidden from his contemporaries. They rejoiced naïvely over the tremendous burst of energy which his system produced, all the more naïvely since only once did he himself express his own mind clearly about the final consequences of his thought, namely, in the preface to his *Rechtsphilosophie*. That the ethical moon was eclipsed by his teaching did not stir up the excitement that might have been expected because in exchange he made the sun of a cosmically grounded belief in progress shine all the more brightly. Still, under the influence of the after-effect of rationalism, the men of that period were so accustomed to consider ethics and belief-in-progress as organically

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connected that they regarded the strengthening of optimism which Hegel effected as necessarily involving a strengthening of ethics. Hegel's scheme, according to which progress takes place in a series of antitheses continually resolved into syntheses which possess real value, has kept optimism alive through the most critical periods right up to the present day. Hegel it was who created the confident sense of reality with which Europe staggered out into the second half of the nineteenth century without being aware that it had left ethics lying behind it on the roadway. And he himself could only hold the optimistic philosophy of history from which his world-view springs, because he lived in a period in which a conviction, which possessed ethical energies of extraordinary strength, was leading humanity forward in a marvellous and unique manner. The great philosopher of history did not see from what source the progress whose reality he was experiencing was really derived. He declared that to be the result of natural forces which was really the product of ethical impulses.

That union of ethics and faith in progress in which the spiritual energy of the modern period had been rooted from the beginning, was dissolved by Hegel's view of the world. When the uniting bond was cut both the partners were destroyed. Ethics withered away, and faith in progress, left to itself, became spiritless and powerless, since it was now merely faith in immanent progress and no longer enthusiastic will-to-progress. With Hegel the spirit comes into being which borrows its ideals empirically from objective reality and believes theoretically in the progress of man rather than it actually works for it. Hegel stands on the captain's bridge of the ocean liner and explains to the passengers the wonders of the machinery which is driving them along and the secrets of working out the course. But he forgets to see that the fire is maintained under the boilers as hitherto. And so, little by little, the speed of the vessel slackens. Finally she stops altogether. She no longer obeys the helm and becomes a prey to the storm.

CHAPTER XIV

THE LATER UTILITARIANISM : BIOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL ETHICS

Benecke, Feuerbach Laas A Comte, Stuart Mill Darwin and Spencer. Biological and sociological ethics. The weaknesses of biological and sociological utilitarianism. Sociological ethics and socialism. Mechanical belief in progress.

THE fact that the speculative philosophy was also incapable of demonstrating that the optimistic-ethical world-view is a logical outcome of nature-philosophy did not rest so oppressively upon the intellectual life of Europe as might have been expected. Its full importance was not appreciated. In the speculative philosophy, in fact, we have to do with a type of thought confined to Germany, a type which flamed up like a lightning flash and which went out as quickly. The rest of Europe took almost no notice of Fichte and Hegel, just as it has paid scarcely any attention to Kant. It did not perceive that these adventurous attacks in the course of the fight for the optimistic-ethical world-view were undertaken by leaders who discerned intuitively that the battle was not to be won with ordinary tactics and strategy. The general conviction, indeed, was that the victory had already been secured long ago. There could no longer be any question about it. It was only later that people in England and France began to realize what Kant, Fichte and Hegel had intended, and to gauge their true importance in the history of the fight for the world-view.

For the intellectual life of Europe the world-view associated with rationalism thus still represented reality, whereas, as a matter of fact, it had already suffered an utter collapse. A generation does not usually live so much in

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the world-view which may flourish in its own day as in the atmosphere inherited from a preceding period. A star still shines in the heavens for us when it has long ago ceased to exist. Scarcely anything in the world has such a tenacious hold on life as has a world-view.

And so the utilitarian ethic, which had become the popular one, failed to grasp the fact that during the course of the first half of the nineteenth century it was coming gradually to a position in which it would have no world-view at all ; and this as the result of the appearance and growth of the historical-romantic, the natural-philosophic and the natural-scientific ways of thinking. Assured of the favour of the healthy human intellect it remains undisturbably in office and still yields important and valuable results. And if it does ever reflect about its future it assumes that in the event of its being obliged at the long last to sever its connection with rationalism, it will be able to come to an arrangement with positivism, the dry and barren world-view which obtains in the exact sciences. As a matter of fact, rationalism itself was being transformed gradually and quite imperceptibly into a sort of popular positivism. The optimistic-ethical interpretation of the universe is still current, but it is less crude and less enthusiastic than formerly. Rationalism maintains itself in this weakened form right up to the end of the nineteenth century and on into the twentieth, and its effect continues to be favourable to the development of civilized ideals, whether it acts independently or in association with popular religious thought.

Whilst Kant, Fichte and Schleiermacher were thus wrestling with the ethical problem, Bentham was providing the world with an ethic. In 1829 the periodical *L'Utilitaire* was founded in Paris to popularize his ideas. In England the *Westminster Review* was working for him. In 1830 F. E. Benecke's translation of the *Foundations of Civil and Criminal Legislation* prepared the way for him in Germany. At his death—he died in 1832, a year after Hegel—Bentham

was able to take with him the conviction that by his means an ethic which fitted in with the demands alike of reason and of the emotions, and made the way clear for both, was on the way to success throughout Western Europe.

All the earlier systems suggested as bases for utilitarianism continue their influence into the nineteenth century. F. E. Benecke (1798-1854),¹ the translator of Bentham, and L. A. Feuerbach,² took up again the attempts of Hartley and Holbach to derive the altruistic element directly from the egoistic, and toiled earnestly to work these efforts into a complete system founded on a sound psychology. Benecke thought he could show how a capacity for moral judgment grows up in a man as a result of the continual action of reason on the emotions of pleasure and pain, and how the moral judgment thus formed continually holds up before him the universal perfection of human society as the highest ideal and end of his activity. Feuerbach would derive altruism from the fact that the impulse exists in man to think himself into the minds of other men and to reconstruct their circumstances for himself. Thus he says that a man's impulse to seek his own happiness loses its original selfish independence, and suffers when the happiness of others is violated. Finally, under the influence of habit, he forgets entirely that he only developed this altruistic attitude in the course of satisfying his own desire for happiness, and assumes as a duty this attitude of care for the well-being of others.

Ernst Laas (1837-85)³ revives the view that ethics consists in the first instance in an habitual, and finally unconscious, taking over by the individual of the criteria originated by the community.

¹ F. E. Benecke : *Grundlegung zur Physik der Sitten* (1822), *Das naturliche System der praktischen Philosophie* (3 vols., 1837-46). Through his advocacy of Utilitarianism, and the opposition to Kantianism necessarily involved in this, Benecke brought on himself the enmity of Hegel, and was forced in 1822 to give up lecturing as a *privat dozent* in the University of Berlin. After the death of Hegel he became a full professor there.

² L. A. Feuerbach : *Das Wesen des Christentums* (1841), *Gottheit, Freiheit und Unsterblichkeit vom Standpunkte der Anthropologie* (1866).

³ Ernst Laas : *Idealismus und Positivismus* (3 vols., 1879-84).

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But, in general, the utilitarianism of the nineteenth century is based on the theory promulgated by Hume and Adam Smith that the non-egoistic impulse is innate in human nature side by side with the egoistic.

Auguste Comte (1798-1857),¹ in his *Physique Sociale*, praises as the great discovery of his time the idea that the fundamental social tendency of human nature is beginning to be recognized. The future of humanity, according to him, depends on the continued steady and direct action of the intellect with this thought as basis, which will enable natural benevolence to produce the highest and most purposive results. If self-sacrifice for the sake of society continues to interact in the majority of individuals with natural egoism, then a community will arise as a result of the rational adjustments between these two which will gradually and steadily grow toward economic and moral perfection.

Utilitarianism in England was defended and developed by John Stuart Mill (1806-73),² the heir in this regard of his father, James Mill (1773-1836).



Utilitarian ethics receives unexpected aid from natural science. Biology proclaims itself able to explain the altruistic element from its natural origin, an element which had been hitherto regarded as co-innate with the egoistic and thus not to be derived from it. The altruistic element, biology now teaches, really has its origin in the egoistic. But it does not arise from the latter as a result of the continually fresh conscious reflections of individual minds. The transformation has taken place as the result of a long and tedious evolution of the species, and is now present in the form of a hereditary instinct. The conviction that the

*¹ The *Physique Sociale* is the fourth volume of Comte's *Cours de philosophie positive* (6 vols., 1830-42).

*² John Stuart Mill: *Principles of Political Economy* (2 vols., 1848). *Utilitarianism* (1861). It was Stuart Mill who introduced the term "utilitarianism" into philosophy to describe this particular class of ethical theories.

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well-being of the individual is best secured by the united activity of many individuals directed toward the common weal, is the result of experience gained during the struggle for existence. Action in accordance with this principle has thus become for individuals a quality which develops progressively as the generations succeed each other. Altruism is our heritage from the masses of those who survived in the struggle for existence, in which others were submerged, just because the social impulse had developed itself in them in its broadest and strongest form.

*Charles Darwin (1809-82),¹ in his *Descent of Man*, and Herbert Spencer (1820-1903),² in his *Principles of Ethics*, develop the same thought. Each appeals to the work of the other as supporting his own.

Altruism is thus viewed as something natural, and at the same time as something which grows as the result of reflection, and the relation which exists between it and egoism is viewed as revealed to us by reason. The conviction that the co-operation of both these impulses will be perfected in the future in the same way as it was evolved in the past is also based on this theory. Both impulses are destined to become progressively clearer with regard to their mutual independence of each other. From sporadic altruism as it is developed in the animal kingdom for the production and preservation of offspring we have advanced to a permanent altruism which serves to maintain the family and the community. It is now our task to perfect this. We shall succeed in this in so far as the compromise between egoism and altruism continues to develop in us in forms ever more refined and purposive. We must rise to the level of the, at first, apparently paradoxical view that, to use the words of Spencer, "the general happiness is to be reached mostly by a parallel effort of all individuals to gain happiness for themselves, and contrariwise the happiness of individuals

¹ Charles Darwin : *Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (2 vols., 1871).

² Herbert Spencer : *Social Statics* (1851), *The Principles of Ethics* (2 vols., 1879).

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will be reached in part as the result of their endeavour to secure the happiness of all." ¹

Comte's *Physique Sociale* thus finds a basis in natural science through the work of Darwin and Spencer.

Utilitarianism goes on its way full of satisfaction, since it has now proved itself with the help of modern biology and the history of evolution to be something fundamentally and objectively natural. But it is neither fresher nor more productive as the result of this experience. Its rate of progress becomes continually slower. It is, as it were, out of breath. What is the matter with it ? Its ethical energy is leaving it because it now believes itself to be something purely natural. The fatal result that ethics, in so far as it is placed on all fours with objective natural events, ceases to be ethics, follows not only when ethics is derived from nature-philosophy, but also when it is explained biologically.

Ethics consists in this, that natural events come into contradiction with themselves in man as a result of conscious reflection. The more this contradiction is pushed away into the realm of instinctive occurrences the weaker the ethic becomes.

It is certain that the origin of ethics is, somehow or other, concerned with the fact that something which is instinctively contained in our will-to-live is taken up and developed in intellectual reflection. But the great question is what this ultimate and supremely original part of our instinct-complex may be, which is developed by reflection until it reaches far over everything merely instinctive, and in what way the process goes on. The very fact that they declare the ethical element to be merely a developed herd-m mentality shows that Darwin and Spencer have not really probed to its foundations the question of the relation of instinct and ethical reflection in ethics. When Nature desires to form a perfect society in the animal kingdom she does not appeal to ethics, but endows the separate individuals, e.g., bees or ants, with instincts by virtue of which

¹ *Principles of Ethics*, vol. i, par. 92.

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they renounce all real individuality in favour of the community. Ethics, however, is activity of the whole complex based on free reflection, which in addition is directed not only toward individuals of the same species, but toward all living beings in general. The ethic of Darwin and Spencer is predestined to fail because it is too narrow in its scope and allows no room for the irrational element. The social impulse with which they replace the innate sympathy of Hume and Adam Smith is on a lower plane than the latter, and consequently less fitted to be the basis of a correct ethical theory.

The passing over of egoism into altruism is thus inexplicable in any complete fashion if one transfers the occurrence from the individual to the species. The fact that the process is greatly lengthened by this means allows us to imagine innumerable stages of development involving the most delicate and minute changes, and to sum up the results of these as a heritage of qualities developed in the course of the struggle. Real ethical altruism, however, cannot be explained in this way. We may hang the fruits of ethics on the bush of social impulse, but it is not this bush which really bears them.

* * *

The strength of utilitarianism consists in its *naïveté*. Bentham and Adam Smith still possess this quality. To them society is the totality of many individuals, not a great organic entity. They bend their efforts to so arrange matters that men shall co-operate to produce the greatest possible amount of mutually beneficial actions.

When we come to Stuart Mill we no longer find this naïvety. To him, and in a still greater measure to Spencer and the others, it is evident that the ethic of the relation of the individual to the individual is not patient of a complete rational demonstration, and so they conclude that "scientific ethics" has only to do with the relations

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between individuals and the organized community as such.

The naïve utilitarianism of Bentham reckons on the response of the individual, in whatever manifold ways the community may demand his self-sacrifice for the sake of the general happiness of its members, and it appeals to his public spirit. Biological and sociological utilitarianism attempts to estimate for his benefit the correct mean and balance as between egoism and self-sacrifice. It aims at being sociology transformed into the general convictions of society.

Adam Smith still makes such a clear distinction between ethics and sociology that he is not a sociologist when he speaks as an ethicist and not an ethicist when he propounds sociological theories. But now both these ways of regarding the subject are interwoven and worked together, and this takes place to such an extent that ethics practically becomes sociology. In the ethics of naïve utilitarianism we are dealing with spiritual actions ; in the biological-sociological form of the theory with a scientific adjustment and running of the complicated machinery of organized society.

In the first case an accompanying action which lacks purposiveness involves at the very most only a diminution of power, in the second it means the destruction of the organism. Thus utilitarianism in its most complete form comes to undervalue the individual ethic which arises from the ethical convictions of separate personalities, and does not think biologically and sociologically.

That there are no more discoveries to make in the realm of individual ethics is assumed as a matter of course by the later utilitarians. They consider it as an uninteresting hinterland, the exploration of which would be entirely unprofitable. Therefore, they limit their investigations to the productive coast-strip of social ethics. They are quite aware that the streams which water these lowlands flow from the hinterland of individual ethics. But instead of following these streams up to their sources they are only

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concerned to secure the coastal plain against floods which may possibly result from them. And with this purpose in view they construct for the water-courses such deeply cut canals that the land remains perfectly dry and barren. Scientific ethics undertakes the impossible task of regulating self-sacrifice objectively. It tries to run water-mills in streams without waterfalls and attempts to shoot with half-drawn bows.

How fearsome and involved are Spencer's disquisitions about absolute and relative ethics! From the natural ethical point of view absolute ethics consists in the fact that man finds innate in himself an absolute ethical Ought. Since the absolute ethic postulates an altruism which knows no limits, and thus from its very nature would lead us to a type of self-sacrifice that would eventually make impossible either existence or action, it must come to a clear and decisive agreement with reality as to how far self-sacrifice shall have its own way, and how far the minimum of compromise demanded for the continuation of existence and action shall have a say in the matter. The scientific biological point of view cannot subscribe to this way of making a dependent relative ethic originate from the absolute ethic. Spencer works up the notion of the absolute ethic and represents it to us as the conduct of the perfect man in the perfect society. We have not, he says, to imagine the ideal man in isolation, but always rather "as he would exist in the ideal social environment". "According to the evolutionary hypothesis both mutually condition each other. And that ideal kind of action is only possible where they both exist together."¹

Thus the ethic under consideration is displayed to us in an objective form. It is conditioned by the relationship in which society and the individual stand to one another in their present state of temporary imperfection. In place of the vital idea of the absolute ethic we have a fiction. The ethic evolved by sociological utilitarians offers men only

¹ *Principles of Ethics*, vol. i., chap. xv.

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relative standards subject to the vicissitudes of time and of changing environments. This is as much as to say that our will-to-be-ethical derives, at best, only a very feeble inspiration from this system, which even helps to confuse it by taking away from it the elemental conviction that it is its duty to exercise its activity to the full without regard to its particular environment and to fight against objective circumstances from an inner necessity of its being without demanding any guarantee as to ultimate results.

Spencer is really a biologist rather than an ethicist. Ethics is to him that arrangement of the principle of utility which we find existing as a heritage of the race. It is a congenital formation of the brain cells, the result of long ages of interaction between this principle and the experiences amidst which it has evolved. This form of presentation sacrifices the innate forces without which ethics cannot live. The longing for fulfilment of the personality to be reached in ethics and the aspiration after spiritual beatitude to be experienced in ethics are deprived of their functions. The ethics of Jesus and the religious thinkers of India moves back altogether from the realm of social ethics to that of individual ethics. Utilitarianism which has changed into scientific ethics gives up its individual ethics in order to give all its attention to social ethics. In the former case ethics can go on living because it still possesses the soil in which its main root is laid and has only given up its outlying territories. In the latter case it is trying to maintain itself in these outlying territories after it has given up its real homeland. Individual ethics without social ethics is certainly incomplete, but it can be very deep and vital. Social ethics without individual ethics is like a limb when the circulation has been cut off, so that the vital principle no longer streams through it. It so far atrophied that it ceases to be ethics at all in any real sense of the word.

The fact that scientific biological ethics thus loses all real power is not shown only in its teaching of the relativity of all ethical standards. We see this also in its inability to

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maintain the standards of humanity at their proper level.

The evolution of ethics is overshadowed by a sort of gruesome legal inevitability. The ethic of antiquity attained a humanitarian tone after it had lost, in the later Stoicism, its interest in the organized community as it encountered this in the ancient State. Modern utilitarianism by a reverse process has lost its humanitarian feeling in proportion as it has developed itself more logically into an ethic of the socially organized community. Nor could this have been avoided. A humanitarian atmosphere can only be maintained on the condition that individuals never allow themselves to lose their own personalities in the general purpose of society, or to sacrifice their individual being for the sake of a common end. A system directed toward the prosperity of the organized community can therefore only be worked out by sacrificing individuals or groups of individuals. In Bentham, where utilitarianism is still naïve, and busies itself with the relation of the individual to the many other individuals, humanitarian thought is still fully maintained. The biological-sociological utilitarianism is obliged to give it up, considering it as sentimentality which cannot stand when brought face to face with matter-of-fact ethical reflection. Thus it includes much which the modern dislike of callousness and cruelty has dropped. It would have individuals appropriate the mentality of the society in which they live instead of maintaining a constant state of tension as between them and it. Society cannot continue to exist without self-sacrifice of some sort. The ethic which is based on an individual ethic tries to distribute this in such a fashion that it may take place as far as possible in the form of the free sacrifice of individuals, and that those who are primarily thus affected should be, as far as practicable, indemnified by others. This ethic is the doctrine of self-sacrifice. The sociological ethic which is no longer based on an individual ethic can do no more than lay down the

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principle that the progress of society takes place as the result of inexorable laws at the cost of the freedom and happiness of individuals and of groups of individuals. This ethic is the doctrine not of free self-sacrifice; but of compulsory sacrifice imposed on us from without.

- Carried out with logical consistency the biological and sociological utilitarianism arrives finally, if hesitatingly, at the conviction that it is no longer its task to aim at the greatest happiness for the greatest number. This, the aim formulated by Bentham, it is now obliged to replace, as being mere sentiment, by something which corresponds more closely to reality. What it aims at realizing in the inter-relation which is in a constant process of development between the individual and the community is not, if it would dare to confess it, a raising of the standard of well-being either of the individual or of society, but rather . . . the raising to a higher grade and bringing to perfection of mere life, as such. However hard it may struggle against this result, utilitarianism, when once it has become biological and sociological, suffers a transformation of its ethical character and enters into the service of supra-ethical aims.
- Spencer still strives to keep it on the road of natural ethical experience.

Once it has devoted itself to uplifting and perfecting impersonal life, refined utilitarianism is no longer able to consider the demands of humanitarian feeling as absolutely binding, but must make up its mind to transgress these in given cases. It is under the thumb of biology.

* * *

It may be agreed that progress in the well-being of society depends on the introduction of the results offered by biology and scientific sociology, without necessarily making the deduction that the conduct thus prescribed as ethical should be left to be practised at their pleasure by individuals. It can also be imposed on the individual from

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without, so that by economic and technical measures the relation between the individual and society is decided and determined in such a way that it functions purposively in an automatic fashion. Thus it is that socialism arises side by side with social ethics. Henri de St. Simon (1760-1825),¹ Charles Fourier (1772-1837)² and P. J. Proudhon (1809-65)³ in France, the factory owner, Robert Owen (1771-1853),⁴ in England, and Ferdinand Lassalle (1825-64)⁵ and others in Germany, are the forerunners of this movement. Karl Marx (1818-83)⁶ and Friedrich Engels (1820-95) in the book *Das Kapital* propound its logical programme in their demand for the abolition of private property, state regulation of employment, and the equitable distribution of wealth.

Das Kapital is a doctrinaire book which deals with definitions and statistics; nowhere does it investigate in any deeper fashion the problems and conditions of life. The enormous influence which it has exerted rests on the fact that it preaches faith in a progress which is implicit in objective events and works itself out automatically in them. It undertakes to expose the mechanism of history and to show how the various forms of society have followed successively on each other; slavery—feudalism—the industrial system—are leading us gradually to the time when we shall do away with private production altogether in favour of state communism, which is thus the logical crowning of the whole evolution. Through the teaching of Marx, Hegel's faith in immanent progress, in a somewhat altered

¹ H. de S. Simon *L'organisateur* (1819-20), *Catecisme des industriels* (1823-24).

² C. Fourier. *Le nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire* (1829).

³ P. J. Proudhon. *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?* (1840)

⁴ R. Owen: *A New View of Society* (1813), *Book of the New Moral World* (7 parts, 1836-49).

⁵ F. Lassalle. *Das System der erworbenen Rechte* (2 vols., 1861), *Offenes Antwortschreiben an das Centralkomitee zur Berufung eines allgemeinen deutschen Arbeitercongresses* (1863).

⁶ K. Marx: *Manifest der kommunistischen Partei* (1848, jointly with F. Engels); *Das Kapital* (1st vol., 1867. The 2nd and 3rd vols. were published by F. Engels in 1884 and 1894).

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form it is true, has become the conviction of the masses. His optimistic interpretation of reality breaks away from control.

Ethical utilitarianism tends to lose its importance as a result of the appearance of socialism. The hopes of the ordinary man begin to be directed no longer on to that which he formerly expected would be attained by a general ethical conviction working for the good of humanity and becoming continually stronger and more purposeful, but on to that which may be anticipated if we give a free hand to the inevitable laws of progress which are involved in the nature of things themselves.

It is true that ethical utilitarianism still maintained its hold on educated people as an effective impulse to reform. Indeed, in competition with socialism, a powerful movement began to function under the influence of which individuals, society, and the State were stirred to purposive action in the face of social needs. One of the leaders of this movement was Friedrich Albert Lange (1828-75), the author of the *History of Materialism* (1866). In his work *The Industrial Question in its Significance for the Present and Future* (1866) he sets forth the social problems of his time and the measures necessary for their solution, and appeals to ethical idealism, without the help of which no really valuable results can, he thinks, be attained.¹

Organized Christianity also supported the movement. In the year 1864, Bishop Ketteler of Mainz argued for the creation of a Christian Socialist consciousness in his pamphlet *The Industrial Question and Christianity*.²

In England it was two clergymen, viz., Frederick Denison

¹ F. A. Lange : *Geschichte des Materialismus* (1866); *Die Arbeiterfrage in ihrer Bedeutung für Gegenwart und Zukunft* (1866). The work of the Berlin economist Gustav Schmoller, *Über einige Grundfragen des Rechts und der Volkswirtschaft* (1875), is conceived in the same spirit. Schmoller is the leader of the so-called "arm-chair socialists".

² The first writer who called the attention of organized Christianity to its obligation to take part in the solution of social questions was Felicité de Lammenais (1782-1854), in his *Words of a Believer* (1833). This book was condemned by the Pope in 1834.

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Maurice (1805-72) and Charles Kingsley (1819-75) who inspired Christianity to develop a social conscience. It was on the evening of Sunday, June 22nd, 1851, that Kingsley preached his famous sermon *The Message of the Church to Labouring Men* to an audience of working men who had come to visit the first World Exhibition in London. On account of the excitement caused by this sermon the Bishop of London inhibited him from preaching.¹

The power of the ethical thought of Jesus was unchained in Russia by Count Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910).² He does not, like the others, present his message as a social idealism characterized by systematic purposiveness, but rather as a command to absolute unorganized self-sacrifice, the form in which Jesus himself had expressed it. Through his long life of eighty years his confessions of faith, broadcasted through the whole world, served to pour the lava of the Early Church into modern Christianity. The social-ethical movement had its greatest effect in Germany because here the State came to its assistance. In the years 1883-84, the Reichstag, as a result of the action of the Social Democratic Party, passed laws for the protection of workmen which are models in their way.

From the very midst of socialism itself thinkers like Eduard Bernstein (b. 1850)³ and others came to realize that the measures intended to help forward the social organization of society would be unsuccessful as long as

¹ The English public became acquainted with the misery of the working classes through Kingsley's novel *Yeast*, which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1848, and in book form in 1851, and two articles by Henry Mayhew in the *Morning Chronicle* (December 14th and 18th, 1849). That Christian Socialism appeared first in England and France was closely connected with the fact that the system of industry which created the social problems in question developed earliest in those countries.

² Leo Tolstoy : *Christ's Christianity* (Eng. trans., 1885). See also *What shall we do?* That Tolstoy's ethical Christianity is combined with a contempt for civilization gives it an Early Christian tone. But it does not solve the problem with which it is supposed to deal, viz., in what way the power of the ethical thoughts of Jesus must be applied in the *milleu* of the modern consciousness and modern circumstances. Tolstoy is a great arouser, but no leader.

³ Eduard Bernstein : *Die Voraussetzungen des Socialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie* (1899).

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they lacked the driving force of a strong ethical idealism. This is a return to the spirit of Lassalle. An effective social-ethical consciousness was now in existence. But it was still only like a water-wheel hung in the great dry bed of a stream. It was no longer a matter of general conviction that the desired reforms would have to be actualized under the guidance of ethics, as it would have been in the rationalistic period. People had less and less use for the old ethical consciousness which aspired to work for the future of humanity.

In the victory, so fatal for the development of civilized humanity, of the Marxian State socialism over the social ideas of Lassalle, which allowed far more play to the natural forces of reality, it becomes clear that in the mentality of the masses belief in progress has emancipated itself from ethics and has become mechanical. The results of this unfortunate separation are confusion in our concept of civilization and destruction of our civilization-consciousness. In it, the modern spirit gives up the very element from which all its power was derived.

How strange are the destinies of ethics ! Utilitarianism refused to have anything to do with nature-philosophy. It aimed at being an ethics which concerned itself only with practical ends. But it could not avoid its fate, and came to an end in nature-philosophy all the same. In the attempt to find a basis for itself, and to think itself out completely, it became biological-sociological utilitarianism. In doing so it lost its ethical character. Without being aware of it, it had in this act begun to have relations with nature and natural occurrences, and to deal with cosmic problems. Although it intended to be only the practical ethic of human society it became "natural". The fact that all the spindles had been taken away was of no avail ; the princess still pricked her finger. No ethic can emerge scathless from its encounter with nature-philosophy.

CHAPTER XV

SCHOPENHAUER AND NIETZSCHE

Schopenhauer's ethic of negation with regard to life and the world. Absorption of ethics by negation of the world and of life. Nietzsche's criticism of current ethics. Nietzsche's ethic of the higher affirmation of life.

As ill-luck would have it, neither of the two most important ethical thinkers who became articulate during the course of the second half of the nineteenth century afford any help to their time in seeking what it needs, namely, a social ethic, which alone is really an ethic at all. Busied only with an individual ethic, of a kind which precludes the development of a social ethic from it, they arouse impulses which, however valuable in themselves, have no power to arrest the demoralization which has set in in the world-view of their contemporaries.

They have this much in common, that they are both elemental thinkers. They deal in abstract cosmic speculations. Ethics is, for them, an expression of the will-to-live. Thus it is intrinsically cosmic.

With Schopenhauer the will-to-live becomes ethical because it leads to negation of life and the world—with Nietzsche because it yields a more profound affirmation of these from the standpoint of elemental ethics. These two thinkers, who stand in such a profound antithesis to one another, both arrogate to themselves the position of judges with regard to that which they find regarded as ethical by their contemporaries.

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) began to write in the early part of the century. His *World as Will and Imagination* appeared in 1819,¹ but he only found a public about

¹ What Schopenhauer wrote after this *chef d'œuvre*, published in his thirtieth year, were only additions to and popular expositions of it, namely, *Über den Willen in der Natur* (1836); *Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik* (1840); *Parerga und Paralipomena* (2 vols., 1851).

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1860, when the speculative philosophy had definitely ceased to function strongly, and the unsatisfying nature^{*} of the ethics of popular utilitarianism, as also that of the Kantianism of the post-Kantians, began to be generally realized. The most significant of these post-Kantians was J. F. Herbart (1770-1841). His real importance lies in the realm of psychological investigation. In his *General Practical Philosophy* (1808) he attempts to found ethics on psychology. He derives the moral sense from five direct taste-judgments, comparable to those of the æsthetic sense, but not further derivable. These are the following : the ideas of intrinsic freedom, perfection, benevolence, justice and equity. The will becomes ethical by subjecting itself to these categories, which come into being as the result of pure intuition, and are confirmed in the mind by experience. Thus, instead of searching for a fundamental principle of morality, Herbart assembles several ethical ideas which happen to originate together. This pale nebulous ethic carried no real power of conviction with it. But Herbart does provide us with something solid in his teaching about society and the State. I. H. Fichte, the son of J. G. Fichte (1797-1859), also belongs to the post-Kantians with his *System of Ethics* (two volumes, 1850-1853), which enjoyed a considerable reputation at the time.

Schopenhauer was the first among Western thinkers to propound an ethic logically derived from a negative attitude toward the world. He was incited to this by his study of Indian philosophy, which began to be known in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹ In order to complete the expression of his world-view he makes use, like Fichte, of Kant's epistemological idealism. Like Fichte he declares the essence of the thing in itself, which must be supposed to lie behind phenomena, to be will, but not will-to-act, as the latter says, rather, more directly and correctly, will-to-live. The world, he says, we know only

¹ In 1802-4 Anquetil Duperron (1731-1805) published, in two volumes, with a Latin translation, his *Oupnek'hat*, a collection of five upanishads which he had brought back from India in a Persian text.

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by analogy from ourselves. We get to know ourselves, considered externally as sensuous appearances in time and space, considered from within as will-to-live. What then is the significance of the world process ? It is simply this, that numberless individualities rooted in the universal will-to-live seek continually for satisfaction which they never attain, in ends which they evolve for themselves as the result of innate impulse. They are involved in a continuous process of self-deception, believing that only the pleasure desired, not that secured, is really pleasure ; they have to fight continually against checks and obstacles ; their own will-to-live comes continually into conflict with that of others. The world is senseless and all existence is suffering. The will-to-live attains to a knowledge of this fact in the highest forms of life, which have reached a point where they are capable of picturing to themselves, in the form of a phenomenal world, the totality of that which is present externally to themselves as will-to-live. Reviewing thus the whole of existence, they are in a position to attain to clarity with regard both to themselves and to existence in general. In European philosophy the will-to-live is infatuated by the fixed idea that it is destined to effect something important in the world. Having become conscious of itself, it now realizes that optimistic affirmation is of no use to it. Such affirmation can only drag it from restlessness to restlessness and from deception to deception. Its aim must be to emerge from the horrible drama in which, dazzled and confused, it has been taking part, and to attain rest in negation of the world and of life.

For Spinoza the meaning of the world-process is that individualities of high value arise who find their true selves in the absolute ; for Fichte, that the activist tendency of the absolute comprehends itself as ethical in these highest forms of individuality ; for Hegel, that the absolute comes to adequate consciousness of itself in such individualities ; for Schopenhauer, that in such individualities the absolute attains self-knowledge and finds salvation from the blind

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impulse implicit in it. Thus the meaning of the world-process is always found in this, that the temporary and the eternal attain to self-consciousness in their mutual relations. Spinoza, Fichte and Hegel—and this is the weak point in their world-view—cannot make really comprehensible to us in what way this experiencing itself in the temporary is to be really significant and important for the absolute. But with Schopenhauer the process really does appear as important. In man the universal will-to-live begins to find its way from the path of unrest and suffering to that of peace.

This, then, is the preface to the transition of existence into non-existence. This non-existence is of course pure negation only from the point of view of the will-to-live which is still filled with the impulse to affirmation and with images and recollections of objective existence. It is impossible to define in terms of our own sensuous imagery what this Buddhist Nirvāna really is in itself. The fact that Schopenhauer made use of the material offered by epistemological idealism to complete his pessimistic-ethical world-view, just as Fichte did to complete his, which was optimistic, is not really so important as he himself thought. His Indian predecessors had anticipated him and placed this connection close to his hand. In itself pessimism can be developed just as well without the assistance of epistemological idealism. The essential drama of the tragic experience of the will-to-live remains the same no matter what the costumes and scenery may be.

In spite of the fact that it makes its appearance in a garment of Kantian epistemology, Schopenhauer's philosophy is thus elemental nature-philosophy all the same. What is the ethical content of his ethics? Like the ethic of the Indians, his appears in a threefold form: as an ethic of resignation, as an ethic of universal sympathy, and as an ethic of world renunciation. Schopenhauer speaks of 'resignation' in forceful phrases. He paints in a passage of poetic exaltation and beauty the way in which the mortal who turns his thoughts to self-realization does not fulfil the destinies of his being in crude opposition to their harshness,

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but feels them rather as incitements to free himself from the world. Amidst the contradictions which poison existence for him, and in the unhappiness which threatens to crush him, he feels himself suddenly lifted above all which he used to value, and carried up into an atmosphere of victorious serenity where nothing external can henceforth affect him. The field of resignation which the philosophical ethics of modern times had allowed to lie fallow for generations was planted again by Schopenhauer. Ethics is sympathy. All life is suffering. The will-to-live which has attained knowledge is thus saturated with profound sympathy for the whole of creation. It sympathizes not only with the sorrows of humanity, but with those of all living beings. What ethics usually speaks of as love is, indeed, the true essence of ethics itself in the form of sympathy. And in this mighty force of sympathy the will-to-live is turned aside from its direct end. Its transformation begins.

What toil do not Kant, Hegel and others undertake to explain and restate the phenomenon of direct sympathy as an ethical element, since it does not lend itself to their theories. Schopenhauer takes the gag from its mouth and bids it speak. Those who, like Fichte, Schleiermacher and others, find an origin for the ethical element in a toilsomely thought-out world-aim, would have us believe that man always climbs to the highest story of the granary of his convictions in order to bring down thence the motives for his moral actions. According to the utilitarians, he always sits down first and reckons out what ethical conduct should be in the given circumstances. Schopenhauer orders him simply to obey the dictates of his heart—a thing unheard of in philosophical ethics. The elemental ethical which had been pushed into a corner by others is set in its place again by him. The others are obliged to confine ethics exclusively to questions affecting the conduct of men toward one another in order not to be involved in contradiction with their own theories. They are eager to prove that sympathy

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with animals is not in itself ethical, but is only of importance as tending to the maintenance of general benevolent feeling amongst human beings. Schopenhauer tears down these fences and exhorts us to love even the most insignificant creatures. Even the most weighty and serious considerations of all those which the others adduce in order to bring man into an ethical relation with organized society are quite useless to him. The ethical over-valuation of the State by Fichte and Hegel makes him smile. He does not need to bring the things of this world into connection with the ethical, with which they have no real affinity. He sets in a dazzling light his conviction that ethics consists in something essentially different from the objective world. He is under no obligation to make any concessions, since he is not concerned, as are the others, to represent the ethical element as something which works out purposively in the objective world. Since his world-view is a negative one he is able to remain an elemental ethicist where the others are obliged to give up this advantage. Also, he has no need, as they have, to forswear any connection with Jesus and religious ethics in general. Again, he is always able to appeal to the fact that his philosophy only finds a foundation for that which had always been considered as the essence of morality, not only by Christian piety, but by that of India as well. The opinion of Schopenhauer that Christianity partakes the Indian spirit, and is probably in some way or other of Indian origin, is well known.¹

Elemental ethics again regains its place in the intellectual world-view. It is this which explains the enthusiasm aroused by Schopenhauer when he at last became known. That it was possible to ignore for forty years the extraordinarily significant idea which he had expressed remains one of the most remarkable events in the history of European thought. The optimistic world-view was thought of at that time as so self-evident that the man who attacked it found no hearing in spite of the directly illuminative ethical thoughts which he advanced. Even after this,

¹ *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol. ii., cap. 41.

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many followed Schopenhauer only for the sake of the natural appeal contained in his ethical passages, and carefully guarded themselves against following him into the negative world-view which was the logical concomitant of these. The instinct they thus obeyed was justified.

* * *

Schopenhauer's ethic, like Schopenhauer's world-view, and like that of the Indian philosophers, is, in the last resort, not ethical but rather supra-ethical, because it arises as a logical negation of the world and of life. It may be true that he speaks in a more elemental fashion than Spinoza, Fichte, Schleiermacher and Hegel in dealing with many aspects of ethical thought, but yet he is not really more ethical than they are. He ends as they do, in the frozen ocean of the supra-ethical point of view, only at the south pole instead of the north pole. The price which he pays in order that he may overbid them in the elemental character of his ethics is his negative world-view. It is a ruinous price. With Schopenhauer, as with the Indians, ethics is only a phase of world- and life-negation. It is nothing in itself, but only exists in virtue of this framework. And everywhere pure negation of the world as such shows through this ethically coloured negation. It stands in the heavens like a sinister sun and devours ethics as the sun does the clouds from which life-giving rain is vainly awaited.

All ethical activity becomes illusory because of the negative attitude toward the world which it necessarily pre-supposes. Schopenhauer's sympathy is only the sympathy of passive reflection. He cannot know, any more than the Indian thinkers, the meaning of that kind of sympathy which involves active assistance. This last has no more meaning for him than has any sort of active effort in the objective world. He is unable to alleviate the wretchedness of other creatures since this wretchedness itself is really rooted in the will-to-live—which always

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involves irremediable sorrow. Thus the one and only thing which sympathy can really affect is to explain to the will-to-live everywhere the kind of snare in which it is caught, and to bring it to the quietness and peace of world- and life-negation. Schopenhauer's sympathy is at bottom, like that of the Brāhmans and the Buddha, only theoretical. It can make use of expressions coined by the religion of love, but it remains far behind this in reality. The ideal of non-activity stands in the way of a real ethic of love in his case just as in that of the Indian thinkers. In addition, the ethic of self-fulfilment is more verbal than actual with him. Inward freedom from the world is really ethical only when the personality so freed becomes thereby capable of acting on the world more clearly and more forcefully. But freedom of this sort is lacking both in Schopenhauer and in Indian philosophy. To these thinkers world-negation is an end in itself. Where its ethical character ceases to exist, there, indeed, it really begins to find itself. Asceticism, says Schopenhauer, ranks higher than ethics. Everything which helps to stifle the will-to-live has meaning and value according to him. Those who renounce love and the hope of children, so that there may be less life in the world, are in the right. Those who deliberately choose this sort of religious suicide, who procure the death of the will-to-live in every imaginable way and extinguish the lamp-wick in Brāhmanic fashion by withholding its nourishment, these prove themselves really and truly wise men. Suicide as the result of desperation, however, is to be rejected. For this does not arise from a genuine attitude of negation, but, on the contrary, is the action of an affirmative will which is discontented only with the conditions amidst which it finds itself.¹

Thus ethics is limited in its scope in Schopenhauer by the extent to which the negation of the world and of life is willing and able to appear ethical. It is only an introduction to, and preparation for, the process of becoming free from the world. In the last resort the rooting out of the

¹ *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, vol i., cap. 69.

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will-to-live takes place as an intellectual act. If I have been forced to the discovery that the whole phenomenal world is only a miserable illusion with no reality behind it, and that it is useless for my will-to-live to take seriously either the world or itself, then I have found salvation. How far and how much I join in the play, now that I know that it is but a play, is of no consequence. Schopenhauer does not think out the pessimistic world-view in the large and quiet fashion of the Indian sages. He paces agitatedly amidst it like a nervous and sickly European. Where the former move with majestic step on the ground of the knowledge which they have attained and which has made them free, and pass from the ethical into the supra-ethical, leaving good and evil behind them as alike over-past, he shows himself a poor Western sceptic.¹ Incapable of living out the world-view which he preaches, he hangs on to life as he does to money, prizes the sweetness of rich cakes as he does that of love, and despises rather than sympathizes with mankind. As if to justify his conduct in this regard, he tells us in his *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, just after he has been speaking of stifling the will-to-live, that there is no obligation on the teacher who exhorts us to saintly pilgrimage to become himself a saintly pilgrim. To quote this famous passage : "It is in general a singular demand to make on the moralist that he should recommend no virtue that he does not possess himself. To present the whole world abstractly, generally, and distinctly, in the forms of ideas, to paint it like a reflected copy in a set of permanent rational images always ready to hand, this I say, and nothing else, is the task of philosophy."²

It is in such paragraphs that Schopenhauer's philosophy really commits suicide. Hegel may say that philosophy is not normative but only reflective thought, for it is true

¹ That he who has attained to the complete negation of the world and of life is a holy man, even if his acts are unethical according to our general standard of conduct, is the teaching both of the Upanishads and of the Bhagavadgita.

² *Op. cit.*, vol. i., cap. 68.

that his philosophy does not set out to be anything more than this latter. But the *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* explains definitely and energetically what is the real essence of the will-to-live. Thus it is obliged to offer itself as the personal confession of this same will-to-live which finds expression in it.

The very fact that Schopenhauer can so far forget himself as to express himself sceptically regarding ethics has its own deeply rooted cause. The essential nature of the world-negation which he wants to impose on us as ethics prevents its being logically thought out to completion or logically carried out in action. Already with the Brāhmans and the Buddha this negation can only live as a result of unstable compromises with world-affirmation. But with Schopenhauer the process is carried so far that he himself no longer seeks to make theory consonant with practice, but is obliged to take deliberate refuge in a direct assertion of their incompatibility. Schopenhauer succeeds in painting in glowing colours the ethical mirage which world-negation is able to produce, but he is just as little capable as are the Indian philosophers of developing from it a genuine ethic.

*

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) began his work under the influence of Schopenhauer.¹ One of the *Untimely Considerations* bears the title of *Schopenhauer as Educator*. Afterwards he went through a process of development which led him to consider a scientifically deepened positivism and utilitarianism as the ideal. He only really found himself from the time of his *Happy Science* (1882) onwards, when he aspired to establish the higher life-affirmation as a world-view and thus became anti-Schopenhauer, anti-Christian and anti-utilitarian.

The criticism which he brings to bear on the philosophic

¹ F. Nietzsche: *Unzeitgemässige Betrachtungen* (1873-76); *Menschliches und Allzumenschliches* (1878-80); *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882); *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1883-1885); *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886); *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (1887); *Der Wille zur Macht* (1906).

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and religious ethic of his predecessors is both passionate and presented in an odious form ; but it goes deep. He brings a double reproach against this ethic : that it practises lack of veracity and that it does not allow man to develop individual personality ; and in this he only says what had been long overdue. Sceptics had already proclaimed a great deal of it. But he expresses it as a man who is concerned for the spiritual future of the race, thus giving the message a new note and a fresh bearing. The current philosophy thinks that it has solved the central difficulty of the ethical question, and is convinced with biological and sociological utilitarianism that there are no more discoveries to be made in the realm of individual ethics. Nietzsche upsets these premature conclusions completely and shows that on the contrary the whole of ethics rests on individual ethics. He brought up again in an elemental fashion the question about the essential nature of good and evil, which people thought was done with once for all. The truth that ethics, in its own particular essence, is self-fulfilment, shines out clearly in his writings, as in those of Kant, though, in truth, in a very different way. Therefore we must accord him a place in the front rank of the ethical thinkers of history. Those who were torn out of their complacent certainty when his passionate writings stormed down, like the spring chinook wind from the high Rocky Mountains, on the intellectual decadence of the outgoing nineteenth century, can never forget the gratitude which they owe to this intellectual agitator of thought, who preached so powerfully his gospel of veracity and personality.

The current ethic of his time is insincere, according to Nietzsche, because the ideas of good and evil which it puts into circulation are not really derived from the reflection of man about the meaning of his life, but are rather invented in order to render individuals serviceable to the general mass. The weak proclaim that sympathy and love are good because the practice of these qualities by others is profitable to them. Thus led astray, all men try to make themselves believe that they are fulfilling the highest

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destiny of their being by giving up their own will and sacrificing themselves for others, but this never becomes their real inward conviction. They go on living without any real thoughts of their own about what it is that makes their life of value. With the crowd they praise as true the moral teaching of humility and self-sacrifice. Actually, however, they do not believe in it, but feel that self-assertion is the natural thing, and act according to its dictates without openly asserting it as a creed. They do not question the ethical respect publicly paid to humility and self-sacrifice, but take part in maintaining it from fear that if this gentling device should cease to be current, men stronger than themselves may become dangerous to them.

Thus the current ethic is a means by which humanity has been deceived in former generations, and by which individuals deceive themselves.

The fiery criticism of Nietzsche is justified at least to the extent that the ethic of humility and self-sacrifice generally avoids entering into a real and straightforward explanation with the facts of objective reality. This ethic really lives by leaving in indistinctness the mass of negative thought contained in it. In theory it preaches negation of life, but in practice it allows an unnatural and sickly affirmation of life to have its own way. Stripped of its passion, in fact, Nietzsche's criticism maintains that only that sort of ethic ought to obtain currency which originates in self-evident reflection about the meaning of life, and can justify itself straightforwardly in the face of reality. Individual ethics takes precedence of all social ethics. The first question which ethics has to answer, is not what it signifies for society, but what it signifies for the self-fulfilment of the individual. Does it, or does it not, allow human beings to develop into personalities? Nietzsche says that current ethics refuses this to men. It does not allow them to grow straight up, but it trains them in devious fashions like twisted espalier trees. It holds up before them its standards of humility and self-sacrifice as representing the real content of perfection. But it has no feeling for the ethical

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element involved in a man's being at one with himself and fulfilling his own nature.

What is nobility? This is the forgotten ethical question which Nietzsche flings at his contemporaries in bitter phrases. Those who were touched, as he shouted his defiant message, by the truth which moved in it and the anguish which trembled through it, have already appropriated the one thing that he had to give.

If the attitude of negation brings with it so much that is unnatural and doubtful, it cannot be ethical. Ethics must thus consist in a higher affirmation of life.

* * *

But what is the higher affirmation of life? Fichte and the speculative philosophers in general say that it consists in this, that the human will comprehends itself in union with the Eternal Will, and thenceforward no longer belongs to the universe in a merely natural fashion, but gives itself knowingly and willingly as an energy working in consonance with the Eternal Will. Nietzsche perceives that they do not, in saying this, develop any worthy and convincing content of the higher life-affirmation, but simply move in an atmosphere of abstractions. He, on the contrary, is determined at any price to deal with elemental facts. Therefore he avoids—and here he resembles Socrates—all philosophizing about the objective universe. He scorns those who are not satisfied with belittling mankind but attack the reality of the objective world as well, by making out that it is merely the result of human imagination. He himself refuses to reflect about anything but the nature of the will-to-live and the way in which it is to be given full scope.

At first he thought that the higher affirmation of life could be understood as the development of the will-to-live to a higher grade of spirituality. But when he attempted to work out this conception it took a different shape under his hand. Higher spirituality signifies, it is true, the

suppression of natural impulses and natural claims on life, and thus has a certain connection with life-negation. The higher affirmation of life can thus only consist of this, that the total content of the will-to-live is raised to its highest thinkable power. Man fulfils his true destiny in affirming with the clearest possible consciousness of self all that is in him . . . even his desires for power and pleasure.

But Nietzsche cannot efface the contradiction between the spiritual and the natural. The more he lays emphasis on the natural the more the spiritual is pushed into the shade. Little by little we can see the influence working of that gradual loss in spirituality which resulted in the emergence of the superman from the original concept of the ideal man—the superman who maintains himself triumphantly against all the arrows of fate and pushes other men out of his way without a semblance of pity.

From henceforward Nietzsche is condemned to arrive at a more or less meaningless living out of self, in the course of thinking out his way from mere affirmation of life to its higher affirmation. He will give rein to the highest aspirations of the will-to-live without bringing that will into due relation with the universe. But the higher affirmation of life can only be actualized where affirmation of life attempts to understand itself through affirmation of the world. Affirmation of life, as such, is never able to become higher life affirmation, but only affirmation of a higher power, no matter what course it may take. Without a set course it whirls round and round in mad circles like a ship when the helm is tied.

But Nietzsche instinctively declines to place life-affirmation in its true setting of world-affirmation, and thus to give it a chance of development into higher and ethical life-affirmation. Life-affirmation carried out in world-affirmation involves, of course, sacrifice of self for the sake of the world. But this means that life-negation, somehow or other, makes its appearance in life-affirmation. But it is exactly this mutual relationship which Nietzsche is concerned to destroy, because ethics as usually taught is stultified by it.

Nietzsche was not the first Western thinker who proclaimed the theory of self-fulfilment—the development of one's individual ego. The Greek sophists, and others after them, were his predecessors in this. But there is a great difference between him and them. They are in favour of self-expression because it means self-enjoyment, but he sets before us the much deeper thought that in the victorious expression of self the life is ennobled, and that the meaning of being is realised in this raising of life to a higher power. Therefore strong and talented individualities need only give their attention to one thing, namely, that the greatness which is potential in them be allowed to actualize itself.¹ Nietzsche's true predecessors were quite unknown to him. They had their home in China, as did those of Spinoza. In that country life-affirmation made the attempt to attain a clear concept of itself. In Lao-tzu and his disciples it is still naïvely ethical. In Chuang-tzu it becomes a less stern form of resignation. In Lie-tzu it is will to secret power over things. In Yang-tzu, finally, an all-round self-expression. Nietzsche is a synthesis of Lie-tzu and Yang-tzu incarnate in a European mentality. It was left to us Europeans to produce the philosophy of brutality.

Zarathustra becomes for Nietzsche the symbol of the thoughts which were forming themselves in him, as being the hero of sincerity, who dares to give the natural life its true value as a good, and as being the genius who stood far apart from the Jewish-Christian way of thought.

At bottom Nietzsche is not unethical like Schopenhauer. He was led away by the contemplation of the ethical element in life-affirmation to exalt life-affirmation as such into an ethic, and continuing thus he arrived at the absurdities involved in the exclusive affirmation of life, as

¹ Max Stirne. (1806–56), whose real name was Kaspar Schmidt, has lately been regarded as a forerunner of Nietzsche by virtue of his book *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (1835), in which he advances the theory of pitiless egoism. But he is not so really. He did not give his anarchistic egoism a deeper philosophical background. He speaks only as a *rasseur*, not as a prophet, and does not rise above the level of the Greek sophists, nor does he show that reverence for life as such which we find in Nietzsche.

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Schopenhauer did at the corresponding absurdities of its negation. Nietzsche's will-to-power is no more detestable in itself than Schopenhauer's will-to-self-destruction as he outlines it in the ascetic portions of his work. It is very interesting that each of these two lived contrary to his own view of life. Schopenhauer was no ascetic, but rather a *bon vivant*. Nietzsche was no lord of men, but shy and retiring. Life-affirmation and life-negation have both an ethical streak in them, but pushed to extremes they become unethical. This result, alike of the optimistic Chinese and pessimistic Indian thought, appears again in Europe in Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, since they are here the unique representatives of elemental philosophizing about the will-to-live, and dare to carry out their thought in a completely one-sided manner. They are thus mutually complementary in pronouncing sentence on the ethics of European philosophy, in that they bring to light elemental ethical thoughts about life-affirmation and life-negation respectively which this philosophy kept carefully hidden. And together they establish the fact that the ethical element consists neither in life-negation nor in life-affirmation, but is rather an enigmatical combination of both. This they do in that they both arrive at a non-ethical goal as the result of their thinking out the implications of life-affirmation and left-negation respectively.

CHAPTER XVI

THE LAST PHASE OF THE FIGHT FOR THE OPTIMISTIC-ETHICAL WORLD-VIEW

Academic ethicists Sidgwick, Stephen; Alexander, Wundt, Paulsen, Höffding. The post-Kantians, Cohen and Herrmann. The ethic of self-fulfilment. Martineau, Bradley, Green, Laurie, Seth, Royce. Nature-philosophy and ethics. Fouillée; Guyau, Lange, Stern. Nature-philosophy and ethics according to Eduard von Hartmann. Nature-philosophy and ethics. Bergson, Chamberlain; Keyserling, Häckel. The death-agony of the optimistic-ethical world-view

THE attempts made by the speculative philosophy to base ethics on knowledge of the world's essential nature all came to nothing. Ethics thought out on scientific and sociological lines showed a complete lack of power. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, although they succeeded in drawing attention again to elemental problems, yet were not in a position to construct a really satisfactory ethical system.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century ethical thought was thus in an unenviable position. But it retained its courage. For it was confident of possessing sufficient scientifically acknowledged data to serve as a guarantee for its assured existence.

A series of mutually related works—principally academic text-books of ethics—serve to establish this conviction. Their authors are of opinion that ethics, like the arch of a bridge, can be permanently built on two piers. One pier is found in the natural ethical tendency of man's nature; the other in the needs of society, by which the general thought of individuals is affected. They see it as their task to construct this building—the possibility of doing so they take for granted—from the solid materials of modern psychology, biology and sociology; and they attempt to

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distribute the weight judgmentally between the two piers. Actually, all that they do is to revive Hume's teaching by the help of fresh means.

The following are the writers who try to arrange this compromise between two different views of ethics—namely, that constructed from the standpoint of ethical personality and that based on the needs of society—Henry Sidgwick¹ (1838–1900), Leslie Stephen² (1832–1904), Samuel Alexander³ (b. 1859), Wilhelm Wundt⁴ (b. 1832), Friedrich Paulsen⁵ (1846–1908), Friedrich Jodl⁶ (b. 1849), Georg von Gizyki⁷ (1851–1895), Harald Höffding⁸ (b. 1843), and others. The most original of these ethicists, who are all essentially related in spite of the various differences due to the methods they adopt, is Leslie Stephen; the most scientific, Wilhelm Wundt; the most ethical, Harald Höffding. According to Höffding, the ethical element derives from a consideration which limits the sovereignty of the ephemeral. "Good," says he, "is a process which secures the totality of life and gives zest and completeness to its content. Evil is that which has a more or less definite tendency to destroy and to narrow down the totality of life and its content." In addition to this we have sympathetic instincts which lead us to find pleasure in the pleasure of others, and pain in their pain. The goal of ethics is the general welfare. Some of these ethicists lay the chief stress on the innate ethical disposition of the individual, whilst others would base it principally on those mental elements whose purpose seems to be the well-being of the community. But they all have one thing in common, viz., that they try to connect together the ethic of ethical personality and that of utilitarianism without having found

¹ Henry Sidgwick: *The Methods of Ethics* (1874). ² Leslie Stephen: *The Science of Ethics* (1882). ³ Samuel Alexander: *Moral Order and Progress* (1889). ⁴ Wilhelm Wundt: *Ethik Eine Untersuchung der Tatsachen und Gesetze des städtischen Lebens* (1887). ⁵ Friedrich Paulsen: *System der Ethik* (1889). ⁶ Friedrich Jodl: *Geschichte der Ethik als philosophische Wissenschaft*. ⁷ G. von Gizyki: *Moralphilosophie* (1888). ⁸ Harald Höffding: *Ethik* (1887). Georg Simmel (1858–1918) represents the critics of modern scientific ethics in his *Einleitung in die Moralswissenschaft* (1892).

**ACADEMIC ETHICISTS : SIDGWICK; STEPHEN; ALEXANDER;
WUNDT; PAULSEN; HÖFFDING**

a sound basis for the higher principle in which both these become one, and therefore the chapters in which they touch on the problem of ultimate moral principles are always the most obscure and the least living parts of their work. They are obviously more comfortable when they have waded through this morass and can again spread themselves in considerations regarding the ethical standpoints which have emerged in the course of history, or devote themselves to explaining their own views concerning individual questions of ethical practice. And also when they deal with practical questions it becomes plain that their views are not based on any real, serviceable and valuable fundamental moral principle. Their attempt to come to an understanding with reality resolves itself into a blind groping here and there: The considerations on which they base their decisions are brought to bear in various ways, and thus give equally various results. They often engage in very attractive discussions about ethical problems; but the concept of the moral is not really either elucidated or deepened as an outcome of their work. The test of a real ethic is whether it does or does not give full scope to the problems of personal morality and of the relation of men to their fellows, problems with which we have to do daily and hourly, and amid which our ethical personality inevitably develops. The academic writings of which we have been speaking do not pass this test. It is true that they earn our respect; but they are not in a position to give a real ethical impulse to the thought of our time.



This ethic of compromise does not hold the field uncontradicted. In Germany the heirs of the Kantian spirit, such as Herrmann Cohen¹ (b. 1842) and Wilhelm Herrmann²

¹ Herrmann Cohen *Kant's Begründung der Ethik* (1877); *Ethik des reinen Willens* (1904). ² W. Herrmann: *Ethik* (1901). In France Charles Renouvier (1838-1903) sought to revivify the Kantian ethic in his *Science de la Morale*

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(1846-1922), and in England the later intuitionists, like James Martineau³ (1805-1900), F. H. Bradley⁴ (b. 1846), T. H. Green⁵ (1836-1882), Simon Laurie⁶ (1827-1909), and James Seth⁷ (b. 1860), proclaim their disagreement with it. Though differing widely in details, these thinkers are united in considering the moral principle as altogether a product of the ethical personality, and in not deriving it in equal measure from the demands of the community on the one hand and the ethical impulses of human nature on the other. They say that in order to attain ethical personality we must get away from ourselves and work for the well-being of men in general.

Cohen and Herrmann try to achieve an ethic both unified and consonant with itself by giving a content to the empty categorical imperative of Kant—a content developed by logical processes. They seek to recover what Kant let slip in his *Prolegomena to a Metaphysic of Morals* and his *Metaphysic of Morals*. According to Cohen, ethics arises as a result of the working of pure will, which develops the idea of the fellow-man, and also that of the association of men to form a State, and constitutes its own ethical ego by this strictly logical operation. The ethic thus achieved consists of sincerity, modesty, loyalty, justice and humanity, and finds its crowning point in the notion of the State as the highest expression of the moral spirit. But throughout its appearance on the stage, his ethic shows itself plainly to be only the child of intellect. The "pure will", of which he speaks, is nothing but an abstraction from which no solid results can accrue.

Wilhelm Herrmann, in place of making ethics a matter of abstract logical deduction, admits it by the back-door, as it were, of experience. It is true that he makes the ethical principle consist in the fact that "the individual acknowledges the authority of something which he feels has a

(1869). ³ James Martineau: *Types of Ethical Theory* (2 vols., 1885). ⁴ F. H. Bradley: *Ethical Studies* (1876). ⁵ T. H. Green: *Prolegomena to Ethics* (posth., 1883). ⁶ Simon Laurie: *Ethica, or the Ethics of Reason* (1885). ⁷ James Seth: *Study of Ethical Principles* (3rd ed., 1894).

THE POST-KANTIANS, COHEN AND HERRMANN. THE ETHIC OF SELF-FULFILMENT. MARTINEAU; BRADLEY; GREEN; LAURIE; SETH; ROYCE

universal value for thought". But we are to attain to this intellectually necessary ethic in the process of beholding our own natures in those of others, as in a mirror, and thus becoming assured as to the correct human relations in which alone we become "trustworthy" to one another. Thus the notion of the unconditioned demand arises in us spontaneously, but at the same time it comes into being as an idea with a distinct content "in an experience of social intercourse, in the relation of mutual trust".

Herrmann did not complete the construction of this philosophical ethic. He merely sketched it out as the prolegomena to a no less elaborate theological system. His general conception is related to Adam Smith's theory of the neutral third.¹

Martineau, Green, Bradley, Laurie and Seth try to arrive at a unified ethic by deriving it entirely from the need for self-fulfilment. Among these James Martineau follows the lines travelled by the Cambridge Platonists of the eighteenth century. For him, ethics consists in our thinking ourselves into the ideal of perfection given to us together with life as a direct divine gift, and letting ourselves be determined by this. Green, Bradley, Laurie and Seth all show traces, more or less pronounced, of Fichte's influence. According to them the central basis of ethics is found in man's living out his life as an effective personality in the deepest sense and thus coming into true communion with the Eternal Spirit. It is Green who develops this thought in the happiest way. In so doing he is led to deal with the relation between civilization and ethics, and lays down the principle that all the attainments of human activity, in especial the social and political perfection of the community, are valueless in themselves, and only possess real significance in so far as they make it possible for the individual to reach a higher level of inner self-fulfilment. In this teaching a highly spiritual notion of civilization is

¹ See p. 86.

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striving to become effective. In America this ethic of self-perfection is represented by Josiah Royce.¹

These thinkers give voice to a vital ethic in their effort to comprehend the whole of ethics as the ethic of self-perfection, that is, as a relation based on inner necessity. Their energetic occupation with the fundamental principle of the moral element, although it deals with the general and with the apparently abstract, always produces results of practical value, even if the advance made towards the solution of the central problem is strictly limited. They are so far successful that they comprehend ethics as a higher life-affirmation, consisting in our entering on the activist life willed for us by the world-spirit in us. They represent the activist mysticism of Fichte without the speculative thought which, in him, formed its foundation.

But the representatives of this school leave unsolved, in fact they do not even formulate, the question as to how this higher life-affirmation comes to ascribe to itself as content a tendency to action which is contradictory to the processes of the objective world. They comprehend higher life-affirmation as self-sacrifice, that is, as life-affirmation in which life-negation is an effective element. How does this paradox come to pass? How far is this tendency of the will to run counter to the natural will-to-live in itself intellectually inevitable? Why must the human spirit become something distinguished from the objective world before it can attain harmony with the world-spirit and thus exist and act in the world? And what significance has this relation of the human spirit to the world for the world-processes which are continually going on in the universe?

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The thoughts of Alfred Fouillée² (1838-1913) and Jean

¹ Josiah Royce: *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy* (1892); *Religious Aspects of Philosophy* (4th ed., 1892).

² A. Fouillée: *Critique des systèmes de morale contemporaine* (1883); *Évolutionisme des idées-forces* (1890); *La morale des idées-forces* (1907).

NATURE-PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS: FOUILLÉE; GUYAU;
LANGE; STERN

Marie Guyau¹ (1854-1888) also revolve around the notion of ethics as higher life-affirmation. They also comprehend the ethical as self-sacrifice, that is as life-affirmation in which life-negation makes its appearance as an element. But they dig deeper than the English and American representatives of the ethic of self-perfection, in that they seek to conceive this ethic as rooted in nature-philosophy. Thus the questions which these others had neglected now come into the foreground. The problem of the fundamental principle of the moral and that of the optimistic-ethical world-view are brought face to face for the first time in a comprehensive and elemental way.

Fouillée writes most inspiringly about the will-to-live. He declares that the ideas directed towards ethical ideals which arise in our minds, are, like all our other ideas, not simply intellectual in their nature, but the expression of forces which press within us towards the fulfilment of being.² We must get hold of the general idea that the evolution through which being passes in the course of the world's existence is the result of intellectually imaginative forces (*idées-forces*) and thus patient of a psychical explanation. This evolution reaches its highest point in the clearly conscious volitional ideas of man. In these highest forms of being reality succeeds in producing ideals which project beyond objective reality, or actuality, and by means of these it is led out over and beyond itself. Ethics is thus a product of world-evolution. The idea of self-perfection through self-sacrifice, which we experience as the enigmatic element in ourselves, is, however, a natural manifestation of the will-to-live. The ego which has arrived at the final height of volition and intellect extends its own being by expanding into the spheres of other human existences. Self-sacrifice is thus not the task of the ego, but one of its

¹ Jean Marie Guyau: *La morale anglaise contemporaine* (1879); *Esquisse d'une morale sans obligation ni sanction* (1885); *L'irreligion de l'avenir* (1886).

² "Toute idée enveloppe un élément impulsif; nulle idée n'est un état simplement représentatif."

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expansion-phenomena.¹ The man who analyses himself more profoundly finds as a matter of actual experience that the highest life-affirmation does not take place when the natural will-to-live simply rises to become will-to-power, but, on the contrary, when it becomes enlarged by sympathy. "Act with regard to others as if you were as conscious of their existence as of your own."²

Jean Marie Guyau, friend and pupil of Fouillée, attempts to round off and complete the thought of this ethically expansive life-affirmation in his *Esquisse d'une morale sans obligation ni sanction*. Ordinary ethical thought, he says, stands helpless in face of the insoluble contradiction between the ego and the existence of others outside it. But our vital nature makes no halt at this point. The individual life is expansive just because it is life. As in the physical realm it responds to the impulse to produce more life of its own sort, so also on the spiritual level it strives to extend its own existence by linking to itself more life of a similar kind. Life is not merely the absorption of nourishment ; it is also production and fruitfulness. True life is not simply taking in, but also a giving out of self. Man is an organism which distributes itself to others. His perfection lies in perfect self-distribution. In this philosophy, we may observe, Hume's notion of sympathy finds a deeper expression.

Fouillée and Guyau, who were both invalids, lived together in Nice and Mentone. Whilst engaged in a mutual search for the ethical higher life-affirmation they happened on the same coast where Nietzsche, in the same year, was thinking out the exalted life-affirmation of the realm beyond good and evil. He knew their work, as they did his ; but personally they remained unknown to him.³ It

¹ ". . . notre conscience de nous-même tendant à sa plénitude par son expansion 'en autrui'."

² "Agis envers les autres comme si tu avais conscience des autres en même temps que de toi."

³ Fouillée attacked Nietzsche's views in 1902 in a paper called *Nietzsche et l'immoralisme*. In Nietzsche we find allusions to the work of Fouillée and Guyau.

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was because they were profound thinkers that Fouillée and Guyau were led to nature-philosophy by their philosophizing about the ethical development of the will-of-life. They wish to comprehend ethics, on the basis of a world-and life-affirming nature-philosophy, as an intellectually inevitable deepening of life-affirmation. They join forces here with the Chinese monists. They venture again what both these, and also Spinoza and Fichte, attempted, but were unable to do, trusting that their nature-philosophy will prove more true to the concept of living existence than did those formulated by their predecessors. Floating on the fierce stream of exalted life-affirmation, they struggle to reach the ethical shore by pulling desperately at the oars. They think that they will be able to beach their boat there . . . but the waves hurry them on past their landing place, doing to them as they have done to others who essayed the journey before them.

They are unable to present convincingly the conclusion that exalted life-affirmation leads, through a paradox inherent in the nature of existence, to ethical self-sacrifice for others. This judgment, in which the natural world-view is enveloped in an ethical one, is only true for thought which dares the leap to shore because it sees no other possibility of getting out of the boat on to the land. Fouillée and Guyau's ethic is thus an enthusiastic conception of life, in which man forces himself to come to an arrangement with existence in order to maintain himself, and to act in the universe, on a higher level of value, which he feels potential in himself.

Fouillée and Guyau are thus elemental ethicists like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. But they do not launch forth, as do the latter, with helm tied fast, into the circle of world- and life-negation or of world- and life-affirmation, but halt, with a surer instinct, at the mysterious union of world-affirmation, life-affirmation and life-negation, which composes ethical life-affirmation . . . this course, however, leads them out to the endless ocean. They never reach the land.

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Ethics must come to some arrangement with nature-philosophy if it is to conceive itself as an intellectually necessary orientation of the will-to-live and to evolve an ethical world-view as its environment. This it seeks—for instance, in the rationalists, in Kant, and in the speculative philosophers—to attribute an optimistic-ethical meaning to the objective world as a result of simple unelaborated thought about it, or at least, as in Spinoza, to give some sort of ethical character to the relation of the individual to the universe. Fouillée and Guyau, also, wrestle with nature-philosophy in order, by its help, to justify ethics and the ethical world-view, and give these a real meaning. But at the same time—and this is the novel element in their thought—they have the courage to face the possibility that they may be unable to carry through their undertaking. What will become of ethics and the ethical world-view in that case? Although we should, as a matter of fact, expect them to fall to pieces, yet they still maintain themselves; such is the verdict of Fouillée and Guyau.

Fouillée, in his *Morale des idées-forces*, says that it is impossible to declare with absolute certainty that the idea of the Good as a final end can lay claim to objective value. Man must find a way of resigning himself to dispense with a final end, in that he forces the ethically expansive life-affirmation on himself, solely because he experiences this last as the only thing which is able to give a real value to life. From love for the ideal he projects himself beyond his own doubts and offers himself to it, untroubled as to whether it will or will not lead to any ultimate result. Guyau, in his *Esquisse d'une morale sans obligation ni sanction*, arrives at similar conclusions. He declares that an inner force works in us and drives us forward. Do we go on alone, or will the idea, in time, come to exert an influence on nature? . . . Do we always go on? . . . Perhaps our earth, perhaps humanity, will some day reach an unknown goal, a goal which they have themselves created. No hand is guiding us. No eye keeps watch on

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our behalf ; the helm was broken long ago, or, rather, it has never been in working order at all ; it has yet to be made so ; this is a great task, and it is our task. . . . Ethical men are sailing on the ocean of circumstances as if on a rudderless and mastless wreck, hoping to land some time and somewhere.

In these sentences we see as from afar the end of the optimistic-ethical interpretation of the world adumbrated for us. It is because they dare this renunciation, and proclaim in principle the autocracy of ethics, that Fouillée and Guyau are to be counted among the greatest of those thinkers who have occupied themselves in constructing a world-view.

But they do not follow out to the end the path on which they have entered. In that they free ethics from any dependence on questions as to whether it can or cannot justify its actions in the totality of world-processes as possessing meaning and producing results, they take for granted the existence of a conflict between world-view and life-view of which previous philosophers had really remained unconscious. But they do not penetrate to the true grounds in which this conflict is rooted, nor do they establish the way in which life-view is able to venture to maintain itself against world-view, nay, more, to extend itself out beyond this. They content themselves with prophesying that ethics and the ethical world-view will grow green again, like mighty oases fed by subterranean waters, even if the sand-storms of scepticism shall have turned into a desert the broad lands of optimistic-ethical cognizance of the world in which we would fain have made our home. At bottom, however, they hope that this last will not come to pass. Their belief that a nature-philosophy worked out correctly with reference to the essential elements of existence will arrive in the end at ethics and an ethical world-view is not wholly shattered.

Fouillée and Guyau have not influenced the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century as

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much as they ought to have done, because they did not directly attribute more than a hypothetical value to the new insight and did not carry it out into a completed system. It is, in truth, the case that the time is not yet ripe for that renunciation of definite knowledge for which their writings prepare the way.

The ethic which Friedrich Albert Lange sketches out as his own, at the end of his *Geschichte des Materialismus* (1866) is a forerunner of that of Fouillée and Guyau. Ethics, he says, is a species of poetry in which we engage because we bear an innate ideal within ourselves. We rise above the actual and seek for something beyond it, because it does not satisfy us. We are ethical because it is in that way that our lives attain distinction and purpose; our ethic supplies us with the ends towards which we yearn. To be ethical is to be free from the objective world. Thus Lange, too, has already discovered that the ethical world-view results from direct philosophizing about the world and life, not as a logical necessity, but as a vital necessity. But, like the two French philosophers, he merely throws out the thought and leaves it, without thinking it out in all its presuppositions and implications.

The Berlin physician, Wilhelm Stern, provides, without referring back to it, a genuine supplement to and completion of the ethic of Fouillée, Guyau and Lange, in an investigation, to which too little attention has been paid, of the historical development of ethical origins.¹ The real essence of morality, he declares, is the impulse to maintain life by warding off all harmful interferences with it; in this process of warding off the individual experiences a feeling of community with all spiritual beings as opposed to the harmful encroachments of nature. How has this mentality originated in us? In this way, that unnumbered generations have been obliged to fight for their existence in concert against the powers of nature, and in their

¹ W. Stern: *Grundlegung der Ethik als positive Wissenschaft* (Dümmler, Berlin, 1897).

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common need have ceased to be inimical to one another in order to present a united opposition to the annihilation which threatens them, or at least to face the latter together. This experience, which began on the lowest plane of existence and has continued on through myriads of generations, has determined the psychological being of living existences. All ethics is affirmation of life, whose character depends upon that idea of the threat to existence which we meet in nature as a universal experience. How much deeper Wilhelm Stern goes than does Darwin ! In Darwin this experience of the continual and general threat to existence only produces the herd-impulse which holds together beings of the same species. In Stern a sort of solidarity with all living beings is developed by means of it. The barriers give way. Man experiences a sense of community with other animals, as these do, though less completely, with him. Ethics is not only something which is a typical property of humanity as such, but is also, even if in more inchoate form, present in non-human creatures. Self-sacrifice is an experience of the deepened impulse to self-maintenance. The other animals are to be included, in the active as well as in the passive sense, in working out the ultimate basis of the moral element.

The fundamental demand of ethics is thus that we should not cause suffering to any spiritual being, even the lowest, obeying therein a necessary law of self-defence, and that we should busy ourselves as far as we are able in positive action for the benefit of other beings.

In Fouillée, Guyau and Lange ethics comes to an understanding with nature-philosophy without securing for itself a really cosmic orientation. Still more, it commits the anachronism of regarding itself as a standardizing of the general attitude of man towards his fellows, instead of enlarging itself so as to include his relation to all living beings and to existence in general.

It is only the ethic which has become universal and cosmic which is really capable of undertaking the investi-

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gation of the fundamental basis of morality ; this only can really come to an agreement with nature-philosophy in a comprehensible manner.

* * *

In Eduard von Hartmann we find ethics making another attempt to comprehend itself in nature-philosophy.¹ His *Philosophy of the Unconscious* has many points of contact with the thought of Fouillée. But with regard to world-view he travels on quite other paths. Instead of letting ethics feel its inner independence of nature-philosophy in the course of coming to an understanding with the latter, he forces it to base itself on such a philosophy. His nature-philosophy is pessimistic. It confesses that it is unable to discover any real meaning or motive in the occurrences of the objective world. Thus von Hartmann, like the Indians and like Schopenhauer, comes to the conclusion that the world-process is something which must ultimately cease. All that is, is destined to be gradually absorbed into the blessed state of will-lessness. Ethics is the mental atmosphere which forwards this development.

Von Hartmann formulates his pessimistic-ethical world-view in obscure but pregnant words at the end of his *Phenomenology of the Moral Consciousness*, as follows : " Real existence is the incarnation of the Godhead, the world-process is the history of the Passion of the incarnate God, and at the same time the road leading to the redemption of Him who was crucified in the flesh ; morality is co-operation in shortening this road of suffering and redemption." But instead of developing further the real nature of this ethics and showing how it is to be put in force, he undertakes to demonstrate that all the ethical standpoints which have ever appeared in history have their own justification. He makes them all stages in a

¹ E. von Hartmann : *Philosophie des Unbewussten* (1869) ; *Phänomenologie des sinnlichen Bewusstseins* (1879).

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single evolutionary scheme, a scheme which is inevitably destined to lead up to the pessimistic ethic. He maintains that every moral principle which we know as a historical phenomenon changes and evolves as it seeks its immediate fulfilment and completion. It lives itself out and then gives place to the higher moral principles which are its own logical successors. Thus the ethical consciousness in man and in humanity works on from moral principle to moral principle right up to the highest level of knowledge. Beginning from the primitive individual-eudæmonistic moral principle, it goes on by way of the authoritative, the æsthetic, the emotional and the rational, which are all alike subjective, to the objective morality which exerts itself to secure the general happiness. Past this it is led to the evolutionary moral principle of the development of civilization. Here it learns to think in a supra-moral way. It comprehends that from the moral point of view there is something higher than the well-being of individuals and of the community, namely, "fighting and struggling for the maintenance and enhancement of civilization". This conception of ethics, unethical according to accepted notions, must live itself out fully, so that it may finally be resolved into the ethic of world- and life-negation.

By this high historical-philosophical insight into the logic of the course of ethical evolution von Hartmann is secured against the (to him) error of protesting, like an ordinary common ethicist, against the unethical civilization-ethics of the outgoing nineteenth century. On the contrary, he knows that he is doing a service to genuine ethical progress in proclaiming it as a necessary phenomenon and leading it on to develop itself to the full on a "secure and well-founded basis". He declares that we have learnt to see through the ethic of individual and national happiness and to recognize it as a sentimentalism; it is now our business to tackle with determination and earnestness the supra-ethical ethic of the elevation and enhancement of life and civilization. We must learn to regard as good

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everything which is necessary for the development of true culture. We are no longer to condemn war in the name of ethics. "Viewed from the standpoint of ethical development, all these protests must appear unsound, since wars are the chief instrument of the race-struggle—that is to say, of natural selection within the bounds of humanity—and the preparation of the peoples for actual warfare has formed, and may be expected to continue to form, one of the most important means by which mankind has been developed and educated during all the phases in the evolution of its civilization."¹ The far-seeing ethical spirit regards even economic misery and the contests to which it gives rise as subserving a higher end. The sufferings attendant on wage-slavery, which are far greater than those of status-slavery, are necessary from the point of view of the civilization-process. The struggle in which they result awakes fresh forces and works educatively. The civilization-process requires the existence of a favoured minority as conscious vehicles of its ideas. Benevolence and care of the poor must also be practised in due measure and proportion. The need which spurs us to such activity must not, however, be entirely destroyed.

"It is also characteristic of the civilization-process that the higher culture-race should take possession of the whole earth. This race, therefore, must augment its own strength to the utmost possible degree. In order to prepare the feminine portion of the population for the consequent duty devolving on it, it must be raised to a higher spiritual plane. This is to be effected by inoculating it as far as we can with feelings of patriotism and nationalism, by arousing its historical sense, and by filling it with enthusiasm for the civilization-principle of evolution. With this object the history of civilization should form the basis of the whole curriculum in the higher classes of girls' schools. . . ."²

¹ *Pbänomenologie*, p. 670.

² *Ibid.*, p. 700.

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We ought thus to strive after "the higher education and formation of the human type" and to attain to an exalted plane of civilization on which "the world-spirit becomes increasingly conscious of itself".

In his philosophy of nature and history Eduard von Hartmann attains to a supra-ethical world-view in which the thoughts of Hegel and Nietzsche drink together in friendly companionship and the principles of inhumanity and relativity which belong to the biological-sociological ethic sit at the same table crowned with wreaths. Von Hartmann is unable to enlighten us as to how and when the supra-ethical ethic of exalted world- and life-affirmation in the highest ethic passes over into world- and life-negation, and in what way this highest ethic, in which we are to play the part of redeemers of the absolute, is to be carried to completion. The unnatural character of his undertaking is sufficiently demonstrated by the abstruse modulations in which, in the last chapter of his work, he attempts to pass from the one to the other. To make Hegel the body of one's world-view and Schopenhauer the head, is utterly senseless. In making up his mind to this course von Hartmann confesses his inability to develop an "enhanced" into an ethical life-affirmation in a natural manner.

Eduard von Hartmann gives precedence to the vocation of the historical philosopher of ethics over that of the pure ethicist. Instead of providing the world with a really ethical ethic, he tries to make it happy by discovering the principle of immanent progress in the history of ethics, and so helps to befool completely a period which was already immersed in an unethical and unspiritual optimism.

From the study of the history of ethics we can gain nothing beyond a certain amount of clarity about the real nature of the ethical problem. He who thinks to discover in this history the principles of an automatically-proceeding ethical progress has actually belied these very principles

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by the poverty of his method of historical reconstruction.



Henri Bergson¹ (b. 1860) renounces altogether the attempt to associate nature-philosophy and ethics. The efforts in the same direction of Houston Stewart Chamberlain² (b. 1855) and Count Herrmann Keyserling³ (b. 1880) are barren of result.

Bergson, in his philosophizing about nature, goes outside the rôle of the observing subject. He analyses in masterly fashion the essential nature of epistemological processes. His investigation of the origin and development of the notion of time, and the conscious processes connected with these, teach us to conceive and comprehend the course of objective phenomena in its living actuality. Leading us out beyond the science of external estimates and calculations, he shows that the true knowledge of existence comes to us through a sort of intuition. To philosophize is to experience our own consciousness as an emanation of the creative impulse which directs and controls the world. Bergson's nature-philosophy is thus inwardly related to that of Fouillée. But he does not feel, as does the latter, the need of making this philosophy the mother of a world-and life-view. He confines himself to presenting it, with the touch of a master, from the standpoint of the epistemological problem. He does not go on to the analysis of the ethical consciousness. We have waited year after year in the hope that he would complete his work by an attempt to found an ethical system on a basis of nature-philosophy. But it suffices him to extend his theories about the inner

¹ Henri Bergson : *Sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (1888); *Matière et mémoire* (1896); *L'évolution créatrice* (1907).

² H. S. Chamberlain : *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (1899); *Immanuel Kant* (1905); *Goethe* (1912).

³ Graf. H. Keyserling : *Das Gefüge der Welt* (1906); *Das Reisegebotbuch eines Philosophen* (1919); *Philosophie als Kunst* (1920).

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knowledge of the real in ever fresh circles of thought. We find in him no justification for the idea that every deepening of our knowledge of the objective world contains a true significance for us only in so far as it teaches us to comprehend our own purpose and duty in life. He allows the waves of objective processes to flow past us as if we were sitting with him on an island in the midst of the stream, whilst actually we are obliged to struggle in the flood like swimmers.

During the war the picture-houses in Germany were filled to overflowing. People went to see the films in order to forget their hunger. The philosophy of Bergson makes us see as a moving panorama the world which Kant pictured for us on rigid tablets. But he does nothing to satisfy the hunger for ethics which is a feature of our times. He offers us no world-view which brings with it a life-view. An atmosphere of quietism and scepticism overlays and surrounds his philosophizing.

Houston Stewart Chamberlain seeks a world-view which shall at the same time be both ethical and based on a nature-philosophy. His work, *Immanuel Kant* (1905), which is really a sort of sketch of the problems which have arisen in philosophy and the solutions which have been attempted, has as its message the thought that the way to the attainment of a true civilization is to unite with one another in one faith the nature-view of Goethe, which comprehends becoming as an eternal existence, and Kant's theory of the essential nature of duty. But Chamberlain is unable to carry out and complete the world-view thus outlined.

Receiving his impulse from Chamberlain,¹ Keyserling goes far beyond Bergson in his philosophical designs. He aims at the attainment of clarity not only about our knowledge of the world, but also about life and action in the world. But from the rocky pinnacle on which he

¹ Chamberlain's *Immanuel Kant* is dedicated to Keyserling, and Keyserling's *Gefüge der Welt* to Chamberlain.

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takes his stand he can only see the plain of knowledge; that of ethics is hidden from him by veils of mist. The highest idea, so he tells us in his *Structure of the World*, is that of truth. We desire to know, "because knowledge, whether it subserves life consciously or not, signifies in itself a purposive reaction against the external world". In true knowledge the human spirit comes into a relation of interaction with the universe. Life bears within itself its own purposiveness.

Keyserling thinks that the world-view of great men is superior to the general moral standards of their time as a matter of course. We ought not to object when we find Leonardo da Vinci gladly entering the service of the French king who had conquered and displaced his own benefactors, the Sforza family, and working as contentedly for the supplanter as for his previous employers. "Almost every great spirit is a complete egoist." For the man who experiences life in its full extent and depth and vitality, interest in the human race is a speciality with which he has nothing more to do.

In the Preface to the second edition of his *Structure of the World* (1920) Keyserling confesses that he has not yet come to any decision about the ethical problem. In *Philosophy as an Art* (1920) he describes it as the most pressing task of our time "to enable the wise man to exist as a type, to educate him still further, and to offer him the necessary publicity and facilities for action".

The wise man is defined as the man who can appreciate truth, who lets all the tones of life awaken responses within his own mind, and who seeks to attune himself to a basic tone innate in his own nature. He has no world-view of universal value to share with us, nor even one which is definitive for himself, but only one which is comprehended as in a state of continual change and evolution. He is unalterable only in this, that he is determined to live out his life in its totality and in vital interaction with the universe, and that he aspires unceasingly to be

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himself. True and superior life-affirmation is thus the last word of this sort of philosophizing about life and the world.

Thus nature-philosophy confesses that it cannot produce an ethic.

Amongst the lesser minds it still continues to deceive itself on this point. The ordinary monism of natural science, whose greatness consists in the fact that it is an elemental enthusiasm for truth in an age which is weary of truth, always imagines that it can extract some sort of ethic from its insight into the nature of life, the evolution from lower to higher forms of life, and the relation of the individual life to the life of the universe. It is, however, very striking to notice that its representatives travel along absolutely diverse ways in their search for an ethic. An unbelievable perplexity and lack of plan characterizes in general the ethical philosophizing of nature-philosophy as we find it amongst the natural scientists. Many of these dream of a concept of morality of a Stoic or Spinozist type as a becoming one with the universe. Others, influenced by Nietzsche, imagine that the true ethic is an exalted aristocratic form of life-affirmation, and has nothing to do with the demands of democratic social ethics.¹ Others, again, such as Johannes Unold, in his work *Der Monismus und seine Ideale* (1908), attempt to connect nature-philosophy and ethics directly in such a way that they may comprehend the socially purposive action of man as the final product of the evolution of the organized world. There are also philosophic natural scientists who are content to construct a universally valid ethic from that which the general opinion regards as moral, and to exalt this, as well as they can, into the position of a product of nature-philosophy. In the *Riddle of the Universe* (1899) E. Häckel (b. 1834) builds such an ethic on to the palace

¹ Thus Otto Braun in his essay, *Monismus und Ethik* (in *Der Monismus*, ed. by A. Drews, vol. i, 1908). The comfortless poverty of this ethic becomes evident when the author attempts to particularize its content.

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of nature-philosophy, like a sort of kitchen added to it. We may say here that the equal justification of egoism and altruism, and the equality which is supposed to exist as between these two, are fundamental principles of monistic moral teaching. Both are declared to be natural laws. Egoism subserves the self-preservation of the individual, altruism that of the race. This "golden moral law" is supposed to be synonymous with that which Jesus and other ethical thinkers before Him expressed in the demand that we should love our neighbours as ourselves. Diluted Spencer is ladled out under the Christian trademark.

* * *

An inexorable development of thought brings with it the result that philosophy, at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, is either going forward to a supra-ethical world-view or dwelling amid ethical ruins. That which happens in the great German speculative philosophy at the beginning of the nineteenth century is a foreshadowing of the end of the play. There we discover that it is sought to found an ethical world-view on a speculative nature-philosophy. The result is that this world-view becomes supra-ethical, as it is avowedly in Hegel. Subsequently there arises a belief that it is possible to conceive ethics "scientifically" by combining the results obtained from psychology, biology and sociology. The more it is thus conceived, the more it loses energy and driving force. And then as, following on the development of the natural sciences and the inner transformation of thought, a nature-philosophy in accord with the scientific observation of nature gradually becomes the only possible philosophy, ethics is again obliged to seek, *pari passu*, a foundation in a nature-philosophy which accords with the world-process. The only meaning of life, however, which nature-philosophy can suggest, is the exaltation and

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perfection of life in some way or other. Thus ethics is obliged to struggle to comprehend the exaltation and perfection of life as something which takes place in and through ethical ideas. This is the goal toward which modern thought reaches out, often in very different forms of effort, without ever attaining to it.

Thus, whenever ethics makes any serious connection with nature-philosophy in any way whatever, in order to secure the convincing ethical world-view demanded by our times, it always comes to nothing as a result of this connection. Either it attempts to give itself out as being actually itself in some way the natural exaltation of life, and in so doing its character is so altered that it really ceases to be ethics at all, or else it resigns altogether, whether it be that it quits the field as in Keyserling's supra-ethical world-view, or that, as in Bergson, it declines to trouble nature-philosophy with ethical questions.

In this way the sun of ethical philosophy is darkened for the people of our times. Nature-philosophy obscures it like a wall of dusky clouds. Just as a flood covers fields and meadows with *débris*, so do the supra-ethical and unethical ways of thinking invade our mentality. The most frightful devastation is being wrought just where we have no clear notions about the oncoming catastrophe, but are only conscious that the spirit of our time has robbed former ethical standards of all their power.

An ethicless conception of civilization is growing up everywhere. The general public is becoming unbelievably familiar with the theory of the relativity of all ethical criteria, and with thoughts which run counter to the humane element in us. Belief in progress, cut loose from ethical volition, is becoming more externalized year by year.

In short, it is now but a wooden cask, which hides from actual view the pessimism seething within. That we have fallen victims to pessimism is evident from the fact that the demand for spiritual progress in the community and

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in humanity at large is no longer seriously made amongst us. Already, almost as if it were self-evident, we have resigned ourselves to the fate of being obliged to treat the high-flying hopes of past generations as a joke. True world- and life-affirmation, penetrating into and informing the deepest parts of man's spiritual nature, no longer exists amongst us. A pessimism against which we are helpless has been devouring us for decades.

We are experiencing the break-up of material and spiritual civilization because we are delivered up to the caprice of objective events in a mental atmosphere which is powerless, since it is void of true and ethical ideals of progress.

Modern times have been capable of an enormous advance toward civilization through their faith in an optimistic-ethical world-view. Since, however, thought has proved itself unable to demonstrate this world-view as inherent in the intrinsic nature of things, we have sunk, consciously or unconsciously, into an atmosphere where a world-view is non-existent, and so into pessimism and a general feeling that ethics is a meaningless word ; in consequence of this we are on the brink of ruin.

The bankruptcy of the optimistic-ethical world-view is publicly announced as little as is that of the ruined States of Europe. But just as the latter is forced on us all the same as an actual matter of fact, as the paper-money continually issued constantly decreases in value, so is the former by the fact that the influence and power of true and deep civilization-ideals become progressively less and less.

CHAPTER XVII

THE NEW WAY

The logical consequences of the impossibility of completely thinking out the implications of the optimistic-ethical world-view. The entire lack of connection between views of life and views of the world.

THE greatness of the European philosophy lies in the fact that it adopted the optimistic-ethical world-view ; its weakness arose from its repeatedly trying to find a ground for this world-view instead of first taking a clear survey of the difficulties involved in the process. It is the task of our generation to aspire through profound reflection toward the attainment of a true and productive world-view, and thus to put an end to the aimless vacillating sort of life which results from our present lack of any real world-view at all. At the present moment our world strikes out aimlessly in all directions like a fallen horse mixed up with its harness. It seeks by short-sighted external measures and new forms of organization to solve the difficult problems with which it has to do. In vain. The horse only gets on to its feet again after we have cut the harness and raised it by its head. And our world will only get on its feet again if it allows itself to be convinced that its salvation does not lie in external measures, but in new moral convictions. New convictions, however, only arise as a result of a true and productive world-view which draws individuals within the sphere of its influence. The one and only productive world-view is the optimistic-ethical. What we have to do is to put fresh life into it. Can we demonstrate its reality ? *

In the struggles of the thinkers who have toiled for centuries to attain to such a demonstration, and who gave their lives for the illusion, shattered again and again, that

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they had succeeded in their quest, the problem in all its bearings is sketched out for us in ever clearer lines. We are now in a position to take stock of the question and to decide that all these roads, planned with such seeming foresight, really lead nowhere, and to understand why. Moreover, we are warned against impassable tracks by the insight thus garnered, and are urged forward upon the one and only passable road.

The most general result of the attempts made hitherto is that the optimistic-ethical interpretation of the world, on which it has been intended to found the corresponding world-view, has not proved itself capable of being carried through. How is it, then, that it seems so logical and so natural to attribute a corresponding tone to both the meaning of life and the meaning of the world? It is so attractive to explain our own existence as arising from and attuned with the nature and significance of the world. Man climbs so naturally on to the ridges of the foot-hills that it seems to him a matter of course that these should lead him straight up to the topmost peak. Then on the upper heights he is suddenly checked by yawning chasms.

The idea that the meaning of human life must necessarily be sought for in the meaning of the objective world is so self-evident to thought that this is not at first confused by the continual failures of previous undertakings. It merely supposes that the matter has not been tackled in the right way. Thus it listens to the whisperings of epistemology and undertakes to depreciate the reality of the objective world in order the better to deal with it. In Kant, in the speculative philosophy, and in many of the popular "spiritualistic" philosophies nearly up to our own time, thought cherishes the hope of attaining its aim through some combination or other of epistemological and ethical idealism. Thus the philosophy of the academic text-books rages against the unsophisticated thought of those who try to attain a world-view without receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire at the hands of Kant. But this also is vanity. The refined and involved attempts

THE LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF COMPLETELY THINKING OUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE OPTIMISTIC-ETHICAL WORLD-VIEW

to comprehend the world in an optimistic-ethical sense have no better success than those of the cruder variety. What our thinking presents as knowledge always turns out to be nothing but a quite unjustified interpretation of the world.

Thought arms itself with the courage of desperation against this avowal because it is afraid that it will then be faced by life as a problem altogether insoluble. What meaning can we possibly give to human existence if we are obliged to renounce any attempt to explain the meaning of the world ? Thought, however, is obliged in the end to adjust itself to objective facts. The impossibility of the attempt to understand the meaning of life in the meaning of the world faces us immediately when we reflect that in objective facts no purposive element is apparent with which the action of men and of humanity can have any possible connection. The human race has been in existence for a relatively infinitesimal space of time on one of the smaller among the myriads of heavenly bodies. For how long will it continue ? Any raising or lowering of the earth's temperature, the slightest eccentric motion of a star or planet, any elevation of the ocean's surface, or any alteration of the composition of the atmosphere would make an end of its existence ; or the earth itself may become a victim of some cosmic catastrophe as has happened to many another heavenly body. We do not know what our own importance is from the point of view of the earth. How much less, then, are we able to estimate our own value or attempt to attribute to the eternal universe a meaning in which we ourselves are an end, or which is to be explained by reference to our existence.

It is not merely the monstrous disproportion of unknown infinite quantity between the universe and man which makes it impossible for us to find a logical foundation in the universe for the aims of humanity. Such an attempt is condemned to failure at the outset by the fact that we have not succeeded in discovering a general all-embracing

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purposiveness in the courses of the objective world. The only purposiveness apparent to us in that world is always entirely isolated. It is true that nature shows herself at times magnificently purposive in the way in which she originates and maintains certain forms of life, but she never seems concerned to unite all these purposive lines directed toward individual aims in one great universal purposiveness. She does not undertake to unite with life in one great common life. She is a force at once wonderfully creative and senselessly destructive. In nature we are faced, it seems, by an insoluble enigma. The essence of the universe is full of meaning in its meaninglessness, meaningless in its fulness of meaning.

* * *

European life has attempted to ignore these elemental certainties. It can do so no more. And even if it could it would derive no profit from the fact. The logical consequences of objective facts have been absorbed and admitted by all of us. Whilst the optimistic-ethical world-view is still current as a dogma, yet we no longer possess the ethical affirmation of the world and of life which ought to result from it. Uncertainty and pessimism, although this is not generally admitted, have taken possession of us.

Nothing then remains for us but to confess that we are in complete ignorance with regard to the objective world, stand, in fact, enclosed by a ring of vociferous riddles. Our very knowledge becomes sceptical.

Hitherto thought has assumed the existence of an evitable connection between world-view and life-view; now that this has gone by the board we have relapsed into a sceptical outlook on life. Is it really true that our view of life is held in tow by our world-view and that, when the former can no longer be kept afloat, the latter must needs be dragged down with it? Our need demands that we

THE ENTIRE LACK OF CONNECTION BETWEEN VIEWS OF LIFE AND VIEWS OF THE WORLD

should cut the tow rope and attempt to navigate our view of life independently.

This manœuvre is not so unexpected as it would seem at first sight. Whilst people were still acting as if their life-view had been derived from their world-view the relationship had already suffered a reversal in reality, for men were actually modelling their world-view according to their life-view. What they were giving out as their opinion about the world was really an explanation about the world derived from their view of life.

In the face of objective facts we attributed to our world-view the same character as belonged to our life-view, and the life-view of European thought was optimistic-ethical. The will, without admitting this, was overpowering the intellect by sheer force. The view of life piped and the world-view danced. It was thus a pure fiction to say that the life-view was derived from the world-view.

This overpowering of the intellect by the will, merely a naïve process hitherto, was practised deliberately and methodically by Kant. His teaching about the "Postulates of the Practical Reason" really signifies nothing else than that the will arrogates to itself the deciding word in final pronouncements as to world-view. Only, Kant knows how to manage skilfully so that the will does not force its supremacy on the intellect, but gets this supremacy freely offered to it, and then wields it in exquisitely parliamentary forms. It acts as if it had been requested by the theoretical reason to lend the actuality of necessary truths to truths merely possible in themselves.

In Fichte the will dictates a world-view to the intellect without any regard for the arts of diplomacy.

From the middle of the nineteenth century onwards a tendency appears in natural science which ceases to push the claim that the world-view should attune itself to the objective truths established by this science. It would let the productive convictions of the traditional world-view remain current, even when they cannot be made consonant

with our knowledge of the objective world. Since the date of the publication of the discourses *Concerning the Limits of Our Knowledge of Nature* (1872), by Du Bois Reymond (1818-96), it has become a matter of good form among certain scientists to declare themselves incompetent to decide metaphysical questions. Little by little something resembling a modern doctrine of the double standard of truth has come into being. The *Kepler Bund*, founded in 1907 by a number of natural scientists, gave expression to this general feeling. It goes so far as to declare that expressions of metaphysical belief which have real value for those who employ them may be used by natural scientists even in the authoritative formulæ laid down by the churches. This new teaching of the double standard of truth is expressed philosophically in the theory of "value-judgments". Through these Albrecht Ritschl (1822-89) and his imitators seek to establish the real value of the religious world-view side by side with that of natural science. Almost the whole religious world, so far as it still attempts to think at all, has attached itself to some such means of escape from its difficulties. In the pragmatic philosophy of William James (1842-1910) the will confesses, in a manner half naïve, half cynical, that the various conceptions of world-view have been concocted solely by itself.

It is thus an objective fact that the points of real value with regard to world-view go back to a will which is determined by similar convictions, and this has been admitted since Kant in the most various and differing ways. The destruction of our feeling for sincerity which has accompanied the no longer crude, but half conscious and artfully practised interpretation of the world, has played a fatal rôle in the mentality of our time.

But why continue on the path of insincerity and make the intellect beholden to the will by an infamous secret policy? The world-views which result from such doings are always poverty-stricken and of little value. Let us foster an honourable relationship between will and intellect.

Two things are united together in that which we have

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called world-view up to the present—a view of the world and a view of life. There was nothing to be said against this union so long as it was possible to cherish the illusion that the two were in harmony and mutually supplemented each other. But now that the divergence can no longer be concealed, the comprehensive notion of world-view with which life-view is organically bound up must be renounced. We can no longer suppose in naive fashion that it is possible to derive our view of life from our view of the world. Nor can we any longer secretly exalt our view of life in some way or other into a world-view. We stand intellectually at the parting of the ways. A critical act of the intellect has become necessary so that we may set aside once and for all the crudities and dishonesties practised hitherto. We must make up our minds to give full freedom as against each other to both life-affirmation and world-affirmation, so that a clear and sincere arrangement may be arrived at between the two. We have to confess to ourselves that in our view of life we are carried beyond the theories which form our world-view, because this life-view consists of convictions derived from the will-to-live, but not confirmed by our intellectual knowledge of the objective world.

This renunciation of a world-view in the old sense, that is to say, a single, self-consistent and inclusive world-view, marks a painful experience in our intellectual life. In it we enter an atmosphere of duality—a duality against which we revolt involuntarily every moment. But we must adjust ourselves to objective facts. Our will-to-live is obliged to recognize the incomprehensible truth that it cannot find itself again, with all its full and genuine convictions, in the manifold will-to-live as this becomes incarnate in the phenomenal world. We had hoped to form a life-view for ourselves out of the theories which we read off from the objective world. But it is determined for us, and draws its life from convictions which appear in our minds as the result of an inner necessity.

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In the old rationalism reason undertook the task of finding a basis for the world. In the new rationalism its task is to determine how to get a clear idea of the will-to-live which exists in us. Thus we return to an elemental philosophy which has to do again with questions of world-and life-view as these directly affect men, and seeks to find a basis for, and to maintain life in, the productive ideas which exist in us. We shall find power again for ethical affirmation of the world and of life in a life-view which is firmly founded on itself and which has a straightforward and clear understanding as to its position with regard to our intellectual knowledge of the objective world.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BASIS OF OPTIMISM CONTAINED IN THE WILL-TO-LIVE

Pessimism as the product of intellectual knowledge. World- and life-affirmation of the self-consistent will-to-live.

THERE are two things which we have a right to demand from intellectual reflection—that it should lead us from a crude to a well-founded world- and life-affirmation, and that it should help us to pass from a region of mere ethical impulses to an ethic based on the necessities of thought.

Deepened affirmation of the world and of life consists in this, that we have the will to maintain and raise to their highest degree of value both our life and all being which comes at all within the sphere of our influence. It demands from us that we should think out all our ideals regarding the material and spiritual perfection of men, of society, and of humanity, and that thus we ourselves should lead lives characterized by constant activity and constant hope. It does not allow us to withdraw into ourselves, but orders us to take a living and, as far as possible, an active interest in everything that is happening around us. To live in unrest because of our active relation with the world when we could have rest by withdrawing into ourselves : this is the burden laid on us by the deeper world- and life-affirmation.

We all begin our lives in an atmosphere of unsophisticated world- and life-affirmation. The will-to-live which exists in us gives us the affirmative attitude as something which is self-evident. But as soon as intellectual reflection awakes the questions arise which turn the hitherto self-evident into a problem. What meaning are we to attribute to our lives ? With what intention are we here in the world ? In the course of the discussion thus initiated between the

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intellect and the will-to-live objective facts give confused and contradictory answers to these questions. Life, they say, lures us with a thousand expectations, of which it fulfils scarcely one. And even those which are ultimately achieved turn out to be deceptions in a sense, since only imagined pleasure is real pleasure ; dissatisfaction is always present somewhere even amidst our gains. Disappointment and sorrow are our lot in the short space of time which lies between birth and death. The spiritual element in us exists in a grizzly kind of dependence on the physical. Our very existence is the prey of meaningless events, and may be put an end to by such at any moment. The will-to-live affords me an impulse to activity. But this very activity is as if I should plough the sea and sow in the furrows of it. What have my predecessors attained ? What significance, if any, has that for which they strove in the eternal courses of the world ? Is the will-to-live only intent, in all the dreams of fancy which it conjures up, on persuading me to delay my existence here a little longer and to bring into being other creatures destined to the same wretched heritage as myself, so that the play may still continue ?

The theories against which the will-to-live dashes itself when it begins to reflect are thus pessimistic through and through. It is thus not accidental that all the religious world-views, with the exception of the Chinese, have a pessimistic tinge. From this earthly existence, they tell us, we have nothing to expect. Who will secure for us the power to make use of our freedom and the power to cast from us the bonds of actuality ? Every reflecting man comes face to face with this thought, and it has much more influence on us than we suspect in our intercourse with others, as, indeed, we are all much more impressed by the enigmas of existence than we realize.

What is it that determines us, so long as we are in some measure in our right senses, to put aside the thought of ending our existence ? An instinctive impulse against such an act. The will-to-live is stronger than the pessimistic

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*intellect. There is in us an instinctive awe in the presence of life, for we ourselves are sparks of the will-to-live.

Even the logical pessimist thought of Brāhmanism makes this concession to the will-to-live that self-willed death is only to take place when a man has already behind him a considerable portion of his life. The Buddha goes still farther. He rejects the idea of deliberate suicide altogether, and only urges that we should do what we can to cause the death of the will-to-live in ourselves.

All pessimism is thus illogical. It does not open the door wide to freedom, but all the same it makes concessions to the established facts of existence. In the pessimistically attuned thought of India we find the attempt to belittle these facts as much as possible and to maintain in being the illogical fiction that only the bare kernel of personality really lives, completely disconnected from the events which are going on around it. With us Westerners the concessions are much greater, since here the adjustments between the will-to-live and the pessimistic intellect take place in a general atmosphere to which the current optimistic world-view gives its tone, so that the adjustment itself is always blurred and obscured by this process. Thus arises an unreflective will-to-live which strangles life by trying to grasp as much happiness as possible for itself, and which aims at doing something without being clear what use that something will be when it has been done.

It is of little consequence whether a greater or less degree of world-affirmation is involved. Wherever the deepened world- and life-affirmation has not been fully attained there is always present a certain amount of degraded will-to-live which is no longer really effective for life.

It generally happens that reflection deprives the will-to-live of its crude force without being capable of introducing it into an atmosphere of conviction in which it may find fresh and higher inspiration. Thus it still possesses energy

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to go on living, though this is insufficient to overcome its pessimism. The stream becomes a swamp.

This is the experience which determines the existence of most men, though they do not admit it to themselves. They are scantily nourished on a modicum of happiness and a number of empty thoughts which life lays on their plates. They are kept in the road of life through stern necessity by elemental duties which they cannot avoid.

Again and again their will-to-live becomes, as it were, intoxicated : spring sunshine, opening flowers, moving clouds, waving fields of grain—all affect it. The manifold will-to-live, which is known to us in the splendid phenomena in which it clothes itself, grasps at their personal wills. They would fain join their shouts to the mighty symphony which is proceeding all around them. The world seems beauteous . . . but the intoxication passes. Dreadful discords only allow them to hear a confused noise, as before, where they had thought to catch the strains of glorious music. The beauty of nature is obscured by the suffering which they discover in every direction. And now they see again that they are driven about like shipwrecked persons on the waste of ocean, only that the boat is at one moment lifted high on the crest of the waves and a moment later sinks deep into the trough ; and that now sunshine and now darkening clouds lie on the surface of the water.

And now they would fain persuade themselves that land lies on the horizon toward which they are driven. Their will-to-live befools their intellect so that it makes efforts to see the world as it would like to see it. It forces this intellect to show them a map which lends support to their hope of land. Once again they essay to reach the shore, until finally their arms sink exhausted for the last time and their eyes rove desperately from wave to wave. . . .

Thus it is with the will-to-live when it is unreflective.

But is there no way out of this dilemma ? Must we either drift aimlessly through lack of reflection or sink in pessimism as the result of reflection ? No. We must

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indeed attempt the limitless ocean, but we may set our sails and steer a determined course.



The will-to-live which aspires to knowledge of the objective world is sure to make shipwreck, the will-to-live which aspires to knowledge of itself is a bold and skilful sailor.

The will-to-live is not obliged to determine its existence according to the demands made on it by knowledge of the objective world, for such knowledge is always dissatisfied. It cannot wait to act until knowledge is complete, and it can subsist on life forces which it finds present in itself. The knowledge which I derive from my will-to-live is richer and more nutritive than that which I gain by consideration of the objective world. Values and impulses affecting our relation to the world and to life are given in the will-to-live, which cannot be justified by intellectual reflection about the world and existence. Why then should we wish to depress the will-to-live to the level of objective knowledge or undertake the senseless attempt to exalt objective knowledge to the level of the will-to-live? What is clear and certain is that we ought to let the ideas, which lie before us in the will-to-live, rank and take effect as the higher knowledge from which alone productive action flows.

My knowledge of the world is a knowledge from the outside and must always remain incomplete. The knowledge derived from my will-to-live is, on the contrary, direct, and goes back to the secret springs of life as life exists in itself.

The highest knowledge is thus to know that I must be true to the will-to-live. This it is which plots the course for me that I must follow through the night without a chart. To live out one's life along its true course, to exalt it, to ennoble it, is natural. Every diminution of the will-to-live is an act of insincerity towards oneself or a definite symptom of ill-health.

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The essential nature of the will-to-live is found in this, that it is determined to live itself out. It bears in itself the impulse to realize itself to the highest possible degree of perfection.

In delicate blossoms, in the manifold wondrous forms of the jelly-fish, in a blade of grass, in the crystal ; everywhere it strives to reach that perfection which is implicit in its own nature. Imaginative power, determined by ideals, is at work in all that is. The impulse toward perfection is innate in us—beings, as we are, endowed with freedom and capable of reflective purposive action—in such a way that we naturally aspire to raise ourselves and every portion of existence affected by our influence to the highest material and spiritual degree of value.

We do not know how this aspiration came to be in us and how it has developed itself in us. It is an intrinsic part of our being. We must follow it if we will not be untrue to the secret will-to-live which is rooted in us. When the will-to-live comes to the point at which its crude world- and life-affirmation has to be exchanged for a thought-out form of the same, then reflection must come to its aid in such a way as to force it to think out all the ideas which are implicit in its nature and to put itself under their guidance. That the will-to-live in us should be true to itself and remain true with itself, that it should suffer no etiolation or belittling, but should develop itself into full and abundant life ; this is the necessary decision upon which the fate of our existence depends.

The will-to-live knows when it has come to full consciousness of itself that its existence is not dependent on anything external to itself. It is its duty and destiny to attain to freedom from the world. Mere intellectual knowledge of the objective world can indeed demonstrate to it, that the result of its aspiration to raise its own life and everything within its circle of influence to the highest degree of value, remains problematical as far as any permanent effect on the courses of the universe is concerned. The will-to-live is, however, not wrong in thus acting. Its

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world- and life-affirmation bears its own meaning in itself. It follows the will-to-live as the result of an inner necessity of its being and it is sufficient to itself. Through it, this world-affirmation, my individual existence becomes attuned to the aims and purposes of the great hidden universal will-to-live, of which I am one among many phenomenal expressions. My deepened world- and life-affirmation is really my way of expressing awe and reverence in the face of life itself. Consciously and willingly I give myself to existence. I become imaginative power like that which works inscrutably in nature. And thus I find within myself a meaning for my own existence.

To have reverence in the face of life is to be in the grip of the eternal, unoriginated, forward-pulsing will, which is the foundation of all being. It raises us above all intellectual knowledge of external objects, and grafts us on to the tree which is assured against drought because it is planted by the rivers of water. All vital religious feeling flows from reverence for life and for the necessity and for the need for ideals which is implicit in life. In reverence for life religious feeling lies before us in its most elemental and most profound form, in which it is no longer involved in explanations of the objective world, nor has anything to do with such, but is pure religious feeling founded altogether in implicit necessity and therefore devoid of care about results.

And, again, the will-to-live which has become reflective and attained to a profound world- and life-affirmation, will necessarily be happy and successful, for as will-to-live it is of course will to the realization of ideals. Its life does not depend on happiness and success. Whatever of these falls to its lot, strengthens it, and for this strengthening it is grateful. But it is determined to act even if happiness and success should be denied to it. It sows like one who does not count on living to see the harvest.

The will-to-live is not a flame which burns only when it has the fuel of events which it desires ; it even gives a purer clearer light when it has to depend on itself for nourishment.

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It shows itself as an actively working will even when surrounding events involve it in certain suffering. In profound reverence for life it makes the existence, which, according to our ordinary notions, is in no way any longer worthy of life, precious, in that in such beings also it develops and experiences its freedom from the world. Quietness and peace pass from such a man to others and they in turn are affected by the secret truth that we must all maintain our freedom in action and in suffering in order to live sincerely.

True resignation is not a becoming weary of the world, rather it is the quiet triumph over the circumstances of life which the will-to-live enjoys in its bitterest need. Such resignation prospers only in the soil of profound world- and life-affirmation.

Thus our life is a process of coming to an understanding which takes place between our will-to-live and the objective world, and in the course of which we have continually to guard ourselves against permitting any degradation of the will-to-live. The battle between optimism and pessimism which goes on in us is necessarily endless. We are always walking on loose stones which overhang the precipice of pessimism. When that which we experience, either in our own existence or in the history of humanity, acts on us so as to depress our will-to-live, and to take away our freshness and our conviction, then we are liable to lose our foothold and to be dragged down into the depths, together with the rock which gives way under us.

But since we know that death awaits us there we drag ourselves painfully up again to the path above. . . . Or it may be that a wave of pessimism comes over us like the longing for rest which takes hold of those who, wearied with travel, sit down in the snow. Oh to renounce once for all the obligation to hope and to will all that which the ideals imposed on us by the deepened will-to-live demand from us! Oh to have no more unrest since here we could attain rest by renouncing the struggle! . . . The intellect whispers gently to our will and would fain persuade it to resign itself to the logic of objective facts. . . .

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This is the fatal resignation into which educated men and civilized humanity in general are too apt to sink and thus to die.

And just when we suppose that the enigmas by which we are surrounded can affect us no longer, somewhere or other the most grizzly of them all presents itself to us again. It is thus that the will-to-live can be destroyed by suffering or by spiritual atrophy. This also, before which our will-to-live trembles as before the supremely inscrutable fact of existence, this also, we must learn to leave as it is.

Thus our pessimistic intellect pursues us to our latest breath. Thus, too, it is of such deep significance that the will-to-live finally and once for all declares itself for freedom from and independence of intellectual comprehension of the objective world, and uses its own power of self-determination to steer its own course by means of that which is implicit in itself. Modestly and courageously it moves on its way through the endless chaos of enigmas, fulfilling its secret destiny and working out its union with the eternal will-to-live.

CHAPTER XIX

THE PROBLEM OF ETHICS AS BASED ON THE HISTORY OF ETHICS

The ethic of self-sacrifice or the ethic of self-fulfilment. Ethics and epistemology —ethics and natural occurrences. The enthusiastic element in ethics. The conflict between the ethic of ethical personality and the ethic of society. A comprehensive ethics.

Thus thought which has a really deep basis attains to an unshakable position of world- and life-affirmation. And now it is really able to make the attempt to lead us to an ethic. But in order that the process may not be merely haphazard, as it so often has been, present-day thought should be required to collect all the guidance which is available from the ethical reflection of the past.

What can we learn from the history of ethics?

The first general result which emerges from such a study is that our ethical search must begin by discovering and demonstrating the great fundamental principle of morality. To make an ethic of the mere enumeration of virtues and duties is as if one should strum ignorantly on the keyboard and imagine that he was producing music.

The fundamental principle of morality must appear as a necessity of thought and must bring men into a permanent, vital and practical relation with objective reality.

The fundamental principles of morality which have been offered us up to the present are completely unsatisfactory. This becomes evident in that they cannot be logically worked out without leading to paradoxes or losing in ethical value.

* Greco-Roman thought attempted to comprehend ethics as rational hedonism. But starting from this standpoint it does not succeed in arriving at the ethic of activist self-

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sacrifice. Shut in to the circle of egoistic utilitarianism, it ends in what is merely an ethically coloured form of resignation.

The ethical thought of the modern period is principally—as the result of Christian influences—of a social utilitarian type from the beginning. To this thought it is self-evident that it is the individual's duty to sacrifice himself in every way for the sake of other individuals and of society. But wherever modern thinkers really try to find a basis for this, to them, self-evident ethic of self-sacrifice, and to really think it out, they are forced on to the most remarkable results, results which contradict one another in all sorts of ways. Sometimes self-sacrifice is explained as refined egoism ; sometimes as something which society exacts from the individual by force ; sometimes as something to which it trains and educates him ; sometimes as something which he, as Bentham, for instance, teaches, absorbs, as a conviction based on the imploring supplications of society ; sometimes as an instinct which he obeys. The first supposition cannot be consistently worked out, the second, third and fourth are unsatisfactory because they present the ethical element as something added to a man from outside ; the last leads us into a *cul-de-sac*. For if self-sacrifice is an instinct, then it must be shown how reflection can work on this instinct and raise it to the level of reflective, comprehending, free-will activity, on which only it really becomes ethical at all. Utilitarianism does not realize that this is the real problem before it ; much less, then, does it solve it. It is always in too great a hurry to secure practical results. In the end it resigns itself to the leadership of biology and sociology, who persuade it to explain itself as a herd-instinct marvellously developed and capable of still further development. Thus, in the end, it takes up a position far below the level of real ethics.

Although it originates from the most elemental and essential of ethical elements, yet it is remarkable that the ethic of self-sacrifice fails, as we have shown, to find expres-

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sion in an intellectually satisfactory form. It seems as if it always had the basic principle of ethics within its reach, but never actually got hold of it. By the side of these two attempts to understand ethics as an effort of rational hedonism, or as self-sacrifice for the sake of our fellow-men individually and the community as a whole, there is also a third. This tries to explain ethics as an effort to attain self-fulfilment. This undertaking has something abstract and daring in it. It scorns to start from a generally recognized content of the ethical, as utilitarianism does, and in contrast to this proposes to thought the task of developing the whole content of the ethical from an innate impulse to self-fulfilment.

Plato, the first representative of a self-fulfilment ethic in the West, and in like manner Schopenhauer, solve the problem as the Indians do, viz., by making world- and life-negation the fundamental ethical principle. But we can get no further along these lines. The negation of the world and of life, logically thought out and worked out, is not ethics but rather the stultification of ethics.

Kant, who has revived the ethic of self-fulfilment in modern times, sets up the notion of absolute obligation without giving it a content. In doing this he confesses his inability to derive the content of ethics from the impulse to self-fulfilment.

If the ethic of self-fulfilment is really to have a content, it must make the ethical element consist either in world- and life-negation or in higher world- and life-affirmation. The first we have already dismissed ; thus only the second remains possible.

Spinoza understands the higher world- and life-affirmation as reflectively attained union with the universe. Therefore he does not attain to a real ethic, but only to an ethically coloured form of resignation. Schleiermacher employs a great deal of skill in order to lend a more living tone to this ethical corollation. Nietzsche avoids the path of resignation, and thus arrives at a world- and life-affirma-

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tion, which yet is only ethical in the one point, namely, that it experiences itself as a striving after self-fulfilment. The only one who succeeds, to some extent, in giving an ethical content to self-fulfilment in world- and life-affirmation is J. G. Fichte ; but the result he reaches is worthless because it pre-supposes an optimistic-ethical view of the essential nature of the universe, and of man's relation to it, which is based on inadmissible speculation.

The ethic of self-fulfilment is thus unable to demonstrate the fundamental principle of morality in such a way as to give it an ethically satisfactory content ; the ethic of self-sacrifice, again, is equally incapable of reaching a fundamental principle founded in logical reflection and based on that content of the ethical which it pre-supposes.

The attempt of the ancients to understand ethics as rational hedonism need not be considered by us. It is too evident that it does not give sufficient consideration to the enigma of self-sacrifice and can never solve it. Thus we have only to deal with the two attempts, so extraordinarily contradictory of each other, of which the one starts from self-sacrifice, considered as a recognized content of the ethical, in order to comprehend it as a quality pertaining to human self-fulfilment, whilst the other starts out from self-fulfilment and seeks to comprehend self-sacrifice as a necessary content of the same.

Is a synthesis of these two possible ? In other words, do self-sacrifice and self-fulfilment belong together in such a way that each is really contained in the other ?

If this inner unity has not been perceived up to now, is not the cause, perhaps, that reflection both about self-sacrifice and about self-fulfilment has not gone sufficiently deep nor been sufficiently comprehensive ?

* * *

Before, however, thought attempts to find a deeper and more comprehensive basis for the essential nature of both

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self-sacrifice and self-fulfilment, it must still further reconstruct for itself in imagination what has come to view in the way of theories and considerations during the course of the Western search for ethics.

We may assume as a recognized fact, that ethics has nothing to expect from epistemology. The abolition of the reality of the world of sense brings it only apparent and entirely illusory advantages. Thought is apt to imagine that there is some profit for the optimistic-ethical interpretation of the world in the possibility of spiritualizing it thus offered. But now it has proved that ethics can just as little be derived from an optimistic-ethical interpretation of the world as world- and life-affirmation can be traced back to such an optimistic interpretation—rather it must be founded on its own self in presence of a world recognized as absolutely inscrutable for now and for always. All attempts to bring ethical and epistemological idealism into intimate relation with each other are, and will be, utterly useless attempts. Ethics no longer takes any account of space and time.

It has great satisfaction in epistemological researches about the real nature of time and space, but actually these affect it not at all. It sees them as an effort after knowledge, an effort which must take place, but it knows that the results of such researches can never touch the essential kernel of its world- and life-view. For itself, it is sufficient to know that the whole world of sense is a phenomenon of forces, *i.e.*, it is composed of enigmatically manifold will-to-live. Herein it thinks spiritually. "But it is materialist in so far as it presupposes the existence of phenomenon and force in a sort of common relationship, so that everything which affects the phenomenon also influences the force which lies behind it. Without such an action of will-to-live on will-to-live, working itself out in phenomena, ethics would appear to itself as objectless. How this relationship of phenomenon and force is to be explained from the stand-point of epistemology, or whether it can be explained at all,

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all this ethics may neglect entirely as not being its business. It claims the right of unsophisticated simplicity in this regard just as does natural science.

In this connection it is interesting to note the fact that it is exactly amongst the advocates of naturalistic materialism that we often find enthusiastic ethical idealism, whilst on the other hand the adherents of the spiritualist philosophy are generally little interested in ethics.

When the assistance of epistemology is thus renounced we find immediately that the ethics of speculative philosophy demands nothing and expects nothing. It has no longer any interest in attaching any kind of ethical significance to the world. Still further, reflective thought discovers from the history of ethics that ethics cannot be simply comprehended as a natural occurrence which takes place from time to time in man. In the ethical man the natural occurrence comes into conflict with itself. Nature knows only blind life-affirmation. The will-to-live which appears in natural forces and in living beings is impelled to work itself out, but in man this natural impulse is crossed by another. Life-affirmation makes efforts to take up life-negation into itself in order to serve other living beings in self-renunciation, and to protect them from harm or destruction, even by complete sacrifice of itself.

Indeed, self-sacrifice plays a certain part even among non-human living beings. It shows its influence as a sporadic instinct in sexual love and in parental love ; we find it as a perpetual instinct among certain individuals of some species (ants, lees) which, since they are a-sexual, are incomplete individualities. These phenomena are, in some sense, a prelude to that accomplishment of life-affirmation by means of life-negation which takes place in the ethical man. But the former do not explain the latter. What was formerly apparent only as a sporadic instinct, or as an instinct of incomplete individualism, and besides only existed within the circle of special solidarity-relations, becomes now a constant free-will limitless action taking

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place as the result of reflection, and in which individuals of higher life-affirmation strive to realize themselves. How does this come to be?

Here we stand again in front of the problem of the *rôle* which reflective thought plays in the origin of ethics. It catches at something which is foreshadowed for it in an instinct, in order to extend this and to bring it to perfection. It grasps the content of an instinct and seeks to realize it in logical conduct.

The *rôle* of thought is connected somehow or other with the full realization of life-affirmation. It stirs up the will-to-live to recognize and enter into community with the life-affirmation which reveals itself in the manifold life around it, and stands in analogy to the life-affirmation which exists within itself. Life-negation appears, based on this world-affirmation, as a means for the full realization of this affirmation of other life. Not life-negation in itself, but only a life-negation which acts in the service of world-affirmation and becomes purposive in so doing, is really ethical. Ethics is like a secret musical triad, in which life-affirmation and world-affirmation take the places of keynote and fifth. Life-negation is the third.

Further it is of importance to note what has been the result of previous ethical research concerning the intensity and extent of the life-negation which is enlisted in the service of world-affirmation. The attempt has been repeatedly made to construct an objective theory of this. Such attempts, however, have always failed. It is of the essential nature of self-sacrifice that it must live itself out subjectively without external limits.

Throughout the history of ethics we find a continual uneasiness in face of anything which cannot be brought into line with objective rules. Over and over again we meet with attempts to explain the essential nature of self-sacrifice in such a way as to bring it within the scope of rational canons. But this always takes place at the cost of the naturalness and vitality of the ethic. Life-negation

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remains something irrational even when it puts itself at the service of purposiveness. It is impossible to arrive at an agreement between life-affirmation and life-negation which shall be binding in all circumstances.

These two remain in a state of unresolved tension with one another. Should this tension lead to rupture, this is a sign that the ethical element has vanished. In its essential nature this tension is boundless enthusiasm. It originates, it is true, in thought. But it cannot be completed in a logical system. Whoever undertakes the journey toward a true ethic must be prepared to be caught and spun around in the whirlpool of the irrational.

Ethics is a high-spirited steed which will not be bridled.

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The fact that it is impossible to develop the ethic of ethical personality into a serviceable ethic of society is closely connected with the subjective enthusiastic nature of ethics. It seems so self-evident that correct social ethics develops naturally from correct individual ethics, and that the one passes over into the other as a city does into its suburbs. But actually they cannot be so built on to one another that the streets of the one may run on into the other. The plans are drawn on principles which take no cognizance of this connection.

The ethic of ethical personality is personal, not subject to rules, and absolute. That which is postulated of society with an eye to its prosperous existence is supra-personal, subject to rules, and relative. Therefore the ethical personality cannot submit itself to it, but remains in continual contradiction with it. It is obliged to come more and more into conflict with it, because it finds it planned on too low a grade.

In the last resort the antagonism between the two is due to the different values which they attach to humani-

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tarianism. Humanitarianism consists in this principle, that a man is never to be sacrificed for an *end*. The ethic of ethical personality desires to preserve humanitarianism; that which is moulded on the needs of society is unable so to preserve it. When the individual has the alternative before him of either sacrificing in some way the happiness or existence of another man for the sake of his own interests, or of receiving injury himself, he is in a position to listen to the demand of ethics and to choose the latter course. But society, thinking supra-personally, and following supra-personal ends, cannot attribute such importance to the happiness and existence of an individual. Its ethic is in principle non-humanitarian. Now individuals are constantly finding themselves in the position of being, in some sense, the directing organs of society. The conflict between the two ethical ways of looking at things then becomes effective. In order that this conflict may be decided always in its favour the community does its best to limit, as far as possible, the authority of the ethic of ethical personality, although inwardly it is obliged to acknowledge its superiority. It desires servants who will not oppose its wishes.

Even the community whose ethic is relatively high is a danger to the individual ethic of its members. But if the defect of its ethic be developed, and if at the same time it exerts an overwhelmingly strong intellectual influence on individuals, then the ethic of ethical personality is doomed. This is exactly what has happened in the modern community whose ethical conscience is blunted by a biological-sociological ethic poisoned by a narrow type of nationalism.

The great error of ethical thought up to the present time is that it refuses to admit the essential difference between the ethic of ethical personality and that which is advanced from the point of view of society, but, on the contrary, always imagines that it must and can pour both of these into one mould. The result is that it sacrifices the ethic of ethical personality to that of society. A conclusion

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must be arrived at in some way. We must understand that the two stand in an antagonism to one another which cannot be softened. Either the ethic of ethical personality will lift society as far as possible to its own level, or it will be dragged down by it.

For the prevention of the disaster hitherto encountered it is not sufficient to wake the individual again to the consciousness that he must be in a state of constant conflict with the ethic of society in order not to be spiritually harmed himself. It is necessary to establish a fundamental principle of morality by the possession of which the ethic of ethical personality may be in a position to come to a logical and fruitful agreement with the ethic of society. Hitherto we ourselves have not been in the position to put this weapon into its hand. Indeed, ethics has been thought of simply as identical with complete self-sacrifice for the sake of the community. The ethic of ethical personality and that which is set up as a standard for society cannot be traced back to a common origin, nor are they equivalent in value. Only the first, in fact, is genuine ethics. The other is ethical merely figuratively. Reflection must be based on the fundamental principle of the absolute ethic if it is to attain to an ethic in any real sense of the word. The reason why ethical thought has made so little advance is that hitherto it has not grasped the above fact. Ethical progress depends upon the exclusion of pessimistic thought about the ethic of society.

In its essence the ethic which forms a standard for society is in the nature of an appeal made by society to the ethical consciousness of the individual, in order that it may thus persuade him to a course of action to which it cannot compel him by law and force. This ethic of society only approaches genuine ethics when it comes to an understanding with the ethic of ethical personality and seeks to bring the demands which it makes on individuals as far as possible into consonance with the latter. Only in the measure in which society takes on the character of an ethical

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personality does its ethic become that of a truly ethical community.

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Reflective thought ought to have busied itself, first of all, with the question as to what various lines of experience and practice come within the connotation of ethics, and how these are mutually related.

To ethics then belong, firstly, the ethic of passive self-fulfilment through the attainment of inner freedom from the world, *i.e.*, resignation ; secondly, the ethic of active self-fulfilment attained in ethical conduct as practised between one man and another, and lastly, the ethic of the ethical community. Ethics thus consists of an extensive series of notes. It emerges from the non-ethical at the point where the vibrations of resignation begin to become intelligible as notes of ethical resignation. Then as the vibrations take on an ever more vital character it passes over from a resignation ethic into the ethic of active self-fulfilment. Still farther up it passes again into the notes of the ethic of society, which already begin to give out a more or less confused sound, and finally fades away in the commands imposed by the community, commands in the form of laws and only ethical in a purely conditional sense.

Up to now ethical thought has always been fragmentary. Ethical thinkers always confine themselves to this or that octave on the keyboard. The Indian philosophers and, following them, Schopenhauer, conceive themselves almost exclusively with the ethic of passive self-fulfilment. Zoroaster, the Hebrew prophets, and the great moralists of China are occupied only with that of active self-fulfilment. The interest of modern Western philosophy is confined, with very few exceptions, to the ethic of society. The ancient thinkers of the West, as a result of the starting-point selected by them, did not advance beyond an ethic of resignation. Only the more profound amongst modern

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thinkers—Kant, Fichte, Nietzsche—begin to dream of an ethic of active self-fulfilment.

It is characteristic of European thought that it plays almost exclusively on the upper octaves, leaving the lower untouched. Its ethic is all treble and no bass. The ethic of resignation plays no part in it. It considers the ethic of obligation, that is to say the activist ethic, as covering the whole field. Spinoza is foreign to its genius just because he is the prophet of a resignation-ethic.

The fatal weakness of modern European thought consists in its inability to understand this idea of resignation and the relations obtaining between it and ethics.

What then are the elements which go to make a full, complete and comprehensive ethics? They are two, viz., the ethic of passive self-fulfilment and that of active self-fulfilment. The ethic constructed from the standpoint of society is merely a corollary of the ethic of activist self-fulfilment which has to be corrected by it. In view of this the complete ethic must be so presented that the way may be opened for a permanent agreement with the ethic of society.

Up to the present only Jesus has really constructed a genuinely complete ethic. In his teaching passive and active self-fulfilment are united in a strong and harmonious consonance. It is true that his ethic of active self-fulfilment makes no effort to adjust and correct to its own standards the ethic of society. This last is sacrificed by him. Passive self-fulfilment is so strongly emphasized that there is no interest left for the corollary.

The ethic of Zoroaster is complete to a certain extent. It also consists of passive and active self-fulfilment, but it allows the first to be overshadowed by the second. On the other hand, we do find here that the ethic of active self-fulfilment has worked out an energetic and productive understanding with the ethic of society. Less profound and less complete than the ethics of Jesus, it yet possesses a normal extension on the side of activity. And so far as it does so it has a modern ring.

CHAPTER XX

THE EVOLUTION OF THE ETHIC OF SELF-SACRIFICE AND THE ETHIC OF SELF-FULFILMENT INTO THE ETHIC OF REVERENCE FOR LIFE

The ethic of self-sacrifice enlarged to become a cosmic ethic. The ethic of self-fulfilment, and mysticism. Abstract mysticism and the mysticism of reality Supra-ethical and ethical mysticism.

It was necessary that the ethics of self-sacrifice and of self-fulfilment should first become clear as to how they stood with regard to the various points and problems which have emerged as the result of ethical investigations in the past. This portion of their task more or less thoroughly accomplished, they are now in a position to attempt to combine their forces in an effort to discover and establish the real fundamental principle of morality. For a combination of forces, however, an intellectual system combining the essentials of both is necessary. How is this to be attained?

Let us consider the ethic of self-sacrifice. The weak point here would seem to be that it is in some way or other too narrow. Social utilitarianism is occupied mainly with the self-sacrifice of one man for another or for human society in general. Self-fulfilment, on the other hand, has something universal about it. It has to do with the relation of the individual to the objective world. And so, if we are to combine the ethic of self-sacrifice with that of self-fulfilment, the former must assume a universal aspect which means that self-sacrifice must no longer be directed only toward the individual and the community, but must somehow be applied to all the life which comes into being in the world.

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Unfortunately the ethical theories of the past do not take us even a single step toward this extension and generalization of self-sacrifice. When a housewife has just scrubbed out a room she is very careful to shut the door for fear the dog should come in and undo all her work with his dirty footmarks. Just so do the European thinkers take the greatest pains to prevent any non-human animals from finding their way into the realm of ethics.

It is really incredible what follies they commit in their efforts to maintain this traditional narrow point of view and to erect it into a principle. Either they refuse to admit the ethical nature of any sympathy for life outside the circle of humanity, or at best they treat such sympathy as a mere ethical fringe of no importance whatever. The slightest admission of such sympathy as a real element of ethics seems to be considered as requiring extensive and detailed justification, if not actual exculpation.

It seems as if Descartes had bewitched the whole of European philosophy when he declared that animals are mere machines.

Even such an important and significant thinker as Wilhelm Wundt disfigures his *Ethics* with the following paragraph : "The only proper object of sympathy is man . . . animals are indeed fellow-creatures, and in this expression, language itself seems to offer a clue to the situation ; we recognize a sort of relationship but in one point only, viz., the final basis of all being, creation."

"Emotions do," he continues, "arise with regard to animals, which are in some sense related to sympathy ; but the condition fundamental to real sympathy is always lacking, viz., that of the inner unity of our will with theirs." And he crowns this piece of wisdom by declaring at the end of his argument that it is impossible to speak of sharing pleasurable emotions with animals in any circumstances whatever ! Surely he has never watched a thirsty ox drinking !

Kant declares categorically that ethics has only to do with the obligations of men to men. He thinks it necessary

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to justify humane treatment of animals as a means of practising that frame of mind which is desirable in our dealings with men.

Bentham, too, champions the cause of animals, and urges their humane treatment, but chiefly as a means of combatting any tendency towards a heartless disposition in our relations with our fellow-men, although he recognizes that a humane disposition is obviously ethical in both cases.

Darwin, in his *Ascent of Man*, tells us that the feeling of sympathy which is a force in the social impulse finally becomes so strong that it extends until it includes all men and even animals. But he does not follow out the question or enlarge on the significance of this fact, and confines himself to constructing an ethic of the human group.

And so it becomes a dogma of European thought that ethics, as such, has only to do with the relation of one human individual to another and to society. The suggestions advanced by Schopenhauer, Stern, and some others, with a view to the breaking down of this venerable ring-fence, were never followed up to any large extent.

This backward tendency is the more incomprehensible when we remember that both Indian and Chinese thought, at a very early period of their evolution, declared ethics to consist in the kindly treatment of all living beings. What is more, they arrived at this result independently of each other. The highly developed and far-reaching injunctions to have thought for animals, which we find in the popular Chinese ethics of the book *Kan Yiu Pien—Concerning Rewards and Punishments*—are not the result of Buddhist influences, as is generally supposed.¹ They are not con-

¹ This book goes back probably to the eleventh century A.D. It is translated by James Legge in the *Sacred Books of the East* (1891). "Treat animals humanely. Do not do harm even to insects, plants or trees", we are commanded in one passage of this book. "It is wrong to worry men and animals; to shoot at birds with arrows; to hunt four-footed beasts; to drive insects out of their holes; to terrify birds when asleep on trees; to stop up the holes of insects and to destroy birds' nests." Pleasure in the chase is condemned as a grave moral error.

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nected with metaphysical speculation about the homogeneous nature of all being, as is the case in the extension of the ethical horizon in which they became effective in Indian thought, but they arise from a vital ethical feeling which dares to draw what seem to it the natural inferences.

If European thought struggles against the idea of allowing a universal connotation to self-sacrifice, the reason lies in the fact that its aim has always been to develop a rational ethic, exercising a control over definite general sanctions. But this is only possible as long as our feet remain firmly planted on the safe ground furnished by discussion and settlement of the interests of human society. We leave this ground as soon as our ethics begins to deal with the relation of man to other living creatures. Once it does, this ethics is forced to put forth theories about existence as such. Willy-nilly it is forced to meet nature-philosophy in the arena and to come to some sort of understanding with it—and the outcome of this adventure is uncertain !

So far, so good. But it has already been shown that the objective normative ethic of society—if it is possible to construct such an ethic at all—can never be a genuine independent ethical system, but only a corollary to such a one. Yet more ; it has been established that genuine ethics is always subjective, that non-rational enthusiasm is its vital breath, and that an understanding with nature-philosophy is essential for it. The ethic of self-sacrifice has thus no alternative but to take this inevitable plunge, or, to vary the metaphor, its house has been burnt down about its ears. It must fare forth into the world to seek its fortune.

Let it dare, then, to conceive the thought that self-sacrifice must extend its connotation so as to include not only men but all creatures, even all life everywhere in the world which comes into the purview of men or may be affected by human activity. Let it rise to the level of the idea that the relation of a man to other men is only one expression of the relationship in which he stands to existence and to the world in general. Having thus become cosmic, the ethic of

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self-sacrifice may hope to meet on equal terms with the ethic of self-fulfilment, which is cosmic through and through, and to enter into an enduring covenant with it.

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Before, however, the ethic of self-fulfilment can enter into partnership with that of self-sacrifice, it must itself become cosmic in the true sense.

The ethic of self-fulfilment is really cosmic in its very essence. It must be so, because self-fulfilment consists in the fact that a man is brought into true relations with that general being which exists both within himself and externally to him. He already stands in a natural external relation to this being. Beginning from this relation, he now develops a spiritual and inner self-surrender to it and allows his passive and active attitude toward the objective world to be coloured and determined by this.

But this effort only carries him part of the way, namely, as far as the attainment of passive self-surrender to existence. He still misses active surrender. It is this one-sidedness which makes it impossible that the ethic of self-fulfilment and the ethic of self-sacrifice should be completed in consonance with one another and unite to produce a full-bodied ethic of passive and active self-fulfilment.

Why is it that the ethic of self-fulfilment, in spite of its efforts, has not succeeded in breaking free from the circle of passivity. The reason is that its inner and spiritual renunciation has been directed to an abstract notion of being rather than to actual being itself. The ultimate result is that it takes the wrong path and passes over into nature-philosophy.

Whence this error and confusion ? It is a result of the difficulties which the ethic of self-fulfilment meets as soon as it attempts to understand itself in terms of nature-philosophy.

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Chinese thought undertakes this orientation in a manner which is profound, though the method of presentation is somewhat strange to us. It supposes that the secret of the really ethical—the root of the moral impulse itself—lies in the impersonal element of world-phenomena. Correspondingly it declares that spiritual surrender of the self to the infinite consists in this, that we disregard our subjective impulses, and regulate our conduct according to the laws of the great objective nature which is revealed to us in phenomena.

The thought of Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu are alike occupied with this profound idea of becoming at one with the world. In Lao-tzu's *Taoteking* the fundamental impulses of this ethic ring their changes in wonderful combinations, but they cannot arrive at a symphony. We cannot find a basis from which to deduce the meaning of objective processes. We can only see this much, that all life eventually ceases to be. Thus, if it is based on the "meaning of existence", the true ethic of life must necessarily be that propounded by Yang-tzu and Nietzsche. Whereas the hypothesis of an objectivity which controls phenomenal occurrences, and which ought to be the standard for our own actions, is nothing else than a rather colourless attempt to give the objective world an ethical significance. And thus this existence, in consonance with the meaning of the objective world, passes over in Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu into an inner freedom from emotional disturbance and from all external events, which is connected with a decided rejection of all tendencies to activism. Where life according to the meaning of existence results in a really activist ethic, as it does in the thought of Confucius, Mi-tzu (Modi) and others, we have again a corresponding significance attributed to the meaning of existence. In fact, everywhere where human thought elevates existence or the objective world to the grade of ethics, what has really happened is that the ethical will of man has somehow or other attributed an ethical character to the world spirit, in order that it may again discover this in it.

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Since no impulses to ethical action can really be discovered in objective occurrences, the ethic of self-fulfilment is obliged to find a basis for both passive and active ethic together in the bare fact of inner spiritual self-surrender to existence. They must both be derived from the pure act as such, without presupposing any sort of ethical quality as an attribute of existence. Only then has our ethical aspiration attained to a complete ethic not complicated or stultified by crudities or self-deceptions.

This is the problem with which the ethical quest of all peoples and periods wearies itself in vain, so far as it dares to think in the spirit of true nature-philosophy. The Chinese, the Indians, the Stoics, Spinoza, Schleiermacher, Fichte, Hegel, all the mystics who treat of becoming one with the absolute, with all these we have the same result, an ethic of resignation—of inner freedom from the world, but never at the same time an ethic of action in the world and on the world.

Certainly it is but rarely that they dare actually to confess the unsatisfactory result of their work. Usually the attempt is made to expand this result in some way so that there may be room for a certain amount of activist ethic ; this is to be kept alive and combined, somehow or other, with the resignation-ethic. But the more logical the thinkers are, the more modest is the place found for this addition, which indeed is always hooked on, as it were, externally.

With Lao-tzù, with Chüang-tzù, with the Brähmans, with the Buddha, with the earlier Stoics, with Spinoza, with Schleiermacher, with Hegel, and with the great monist mystics, activist ethics is reduced almost to nothing. With Confucius, with Mencius, with the Hindu thinkers, with the later Stoics, and with Fichte, it makes strenuous efforts to maintain itself. It succeeds, however, only in so far as it avails itself of the help of either crude or elaborated thought. It must endeavour to find the meaning of human

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existence in the fact that men are not satisfied to be merely part of the external existence naturally and inevitably, but desire to belong to it inwardly and spiritually by a conscious act of their own will.

The ethics of self-fulfilment is inwardly and intimately connected with mysticism. Their fates are bound up together. To hold the intellectual creed of the ethic of self-fulfilment is to attempt to found ethics in mysticism. And on the other side mysticism is a world- and life-affirmation of any value only in so far as it is ethical.

But it will not succeed in becoming ethical. The experience of becoming one with the absolute, of existing in the world spirit, of ascent into the divine, or however else it may be expressed, is not in itself ethical but rather intellectual.

Indian thought is perfectly conscious of this profound distinction. It couches the pronouncement that spirituality is not ethics in the most various formulæ. We Europeans remain crude in mystical matters. What passes for mysticism with us is generally more or less Christian, *i.e.*, ethically coloured, mysticism. For that reason we are inclined to deceive ourselves with regard to the supposed ethical content of mysticism.

If one analyses the mysticism of all races and periods with regard to its ethical content, it will be found that this is extraordinarily meagre. Even the ethic of resignation, which seems to belong naturally to mysticism, becomes attainted with a certain degree of powerlessness in its contact with the latter, sometimes more, sometimes less. Through the failure of the activist ethic, through which it ought normally to be connected, it loses its hold to a certain extent, and is pushed back more and more into the region of resignation which is no longer ethical. Thus arises a mysticism which no longer acts in the service of our aspiration towards self-fulfilment—which is its fundamental vocation—but rather allows absorption into the absolute to become its final aim. The purer the mysticism the more complete and far-reaching is this development. It becomes itself a world- and life-view, viz., that of absorption in the

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eternal, even if it does not ever, as is the case with the Brāhmans, become transformed into the arrogant mysticism which teaches that eternal being can take full possession, here and now, of our mortal existence. The ethic of self-fulfilment which ought to grow out of mysticism is thus in constant danger of vanishing in mysticism.

The tendency of mysticism to become supra-ethical is perfectly natural. As a matter of fact, the relationship with a quality-less and self-sufficient absolute has lost all connection with self-fulfilment. It turns into a pure act of consciousness and leads to a kind of spirituality which is just as empty of content as is the pre-supposed absolute. Feeling its own weakness, mysticism makes constant efforts to become more ethical, or at any rate to seem more ethical than it really is. Even Indian mysticism makes efforts in this direction, although on the other side again it has the courage of sincerity and deliberately exalts the spiritual above the ethical.

In order to estimate the real ethical value of mysticism we ought only to take account of the genuine ethical element contained in it and to leave on one side its attitude toward ethics or its talk about ethics. But if we do this even the ethical content of Christian mysticism itself will be found to be alarmingly small. Mysticism is not the friend but the enemy of ethics, which always vanishes in it. And yet any ethic which is to be intellectually satisfactory must be born of mysticism. All profound philosophy, all profound religion, is finally nothing else than a struggle to attain an ethical mysticism and a mystical ethics.

Mastered by our aspiration after an activist-ethical world- and life-view, we Westerners have not given a sufficiently free hand to mysticism. Amongst us its existence has been secret and sporadic. We feel instinctively that it is antagonistic to activist ethics. Thus we have no inner relation with it.

But our great mistake is that we think ourselves able to

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reach an ethical world- and life-view which will satisfy the intellect, without the aid of mysticism. Hitherto we have done nothing but invent world- and life-views. They are good in so far as they keep man faithful to an activist ethic. But they are not true. Therefore they always end in a collapse. In addition they are not profound. For this reason European thought tends to make men ethical but superficial. Because he has been fed to satiety with world-views artificially devised to fit an activist ethic, the European man has neither comprehensive grasp nor inner personality, nor does he feel the slightest need for either.

It is full time that we should give up this mistaken way of looking at things. The world- and life-view of activist ethics has a deep and firm footing in thought only when it is based in, and grows out of, mysticism. The question what we are to do with our lives is not solved when we have been hunted out into the world by a vague impulse to activity and not allowed to indulge in the reflection which alone can lead to intellectual conviction. It can only really be met by a world- and life-view which brings men into an inner and spiritual relationship with existence of such a kind that an ethic at once passive and active is its inevitable product.

The sort of mysticism with which we have hitherto been acquainted cannot afford this result because it is supra-ethical. Thought must struggle to attain an ethical mysticism. We must rise to a spirituality which is ethical and to an ethics which contains in itself all spirituality. Then only shall we be qualified to live in the real and profound sense of the word.

Ethics must make up its mind to base itself in mysticism. But mysticism, on its side, must never suppose that it exists for its own sake. It is not the blossom itself, but only the green calyx which is its support. The blossom is ethics. Mysticism that exists for its own sake is the salt which has lost its savour.

Up to the present time mysticism has always led to the supra-ethical because it is abstract. Abstraction means

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death to ethics, for ethics involves a vital relation to vital life. So we must give up abstract mysticism and betake ourselves to a vital form of it.

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The content of existence, the absolute, the world-spirit, and all expressions of this sort do not signify anything real but only something intellectually concocted in abstraction, of which for this very reason it is impossible to form any clear idea. The only real thing is the existence which is revealed to us in phenomena.

How does thought come to this meaningless result of urging men to enter into spiritual relationship with an unreal figment of the intellect ? The answer is, through a double temptation, on one side general, on the other special.

Exhorted to express itself in words, thought appropriates the abstractions and symbols coined by a language. These coins can only find currency in so far as they allow us to express things concisely instead of presenting them with all the circumstance amidst which they are perceived. But the disadvantage is that thought is apt to use these abstractions and symbols as if they denoted the actual data of perception. This is the general temptation.

The special temptation in this case is the fact that man's surrender of himself to the eternal being finds an alluringly simple expression by the help of abstractions and symbols. It is made to consist merely of the fact that he comes into relation with the totality of existence, that is with its spiritual essence.

Verbally and intellectually this looks very attractive, but reality knows nothing of such a process as the entrance of the individual into a relationship with the totality of existence. Just as it only knows existence as it appears in individual existence, so the only relationships it knows are those of one individual being to another. Thus if mysticism wishes to deal in realities, there is no other course open to it

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but to throw away the abstractions which it usually employs, and to confess that when it speaks of this imagined essence of existence it has really nothing rational to offer us. Let it become as indifferent to the absolute as is a converted negro to his fetish. It behoves it to be thoroughly and earnestly converted to the mysticism of reality. Let it reject the decorations and declamations of the stage and strive to find its true life in the bosom of nature.

There is really no such thing as an essence or content of existence, but only eternal existence in eternal phenomena. My own being communes with eternal being only and solely by means of the phenomena of being, and only then in those with which I come in contact. The surrender of my being to eternal being is the surrender of my being to all the phenomena of being which stand in need of my self-sacrifice and which I am in a position to help by such renouncements.

Only an infinitesimal part of infinite being can ever be affected by my personality. All the rest floats past me utterly indifferent to my existence, like far-away ships to which I make futile signals. But in giving myself for the sake of that which comes into my tiny circle of influence, and which has need of my help, I realize the inner spiritual self-surrender to eternal being and thus lend meaning and richness to my own poor existence. The river has rejoined its ocean.

From self-surrender to the absolute nothing but a dead spirituality can ever result. It is a purely intellectual act. It produces no inspiration to action. On the ground of an intellectualism of this sort even the ethic of resignation is only able to obtain a meagre respite for its existence. But in the mysticism of reality self-sacrifice is no longer a purely intellectual act, but one in which every vital element of man's nature has its part. Spiritual forces rule in it which carry in themselves an elemental impulse to activity. The grim truth that spirituality and ethics are two absolutely distinct things is here no longer of force. Here both are one and the same thing.

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And now the ethic of self-fulfilment and the ethic of self-sacrifice can attain their full form and force. They become cosmic at last in a nature-philosophy which leaves the objective world as it is. The only course open to both of them is to meet and unite in one rich thought which fulfils the needs of the intellect in every direction—the thought of living self-surrender to the one great living existence. In this thought passive and active self-fulfilment find each other in perfect mutual accord. They comprehend their own existence as the working out of a single inner necessity, one and the same in both. And now that they have become one they no longer need to toil and struggle in an attempt to construct in collaboration a complete ethic of action on the world on the basis of freedom from the world. For this lies before their eyes. It has come into being of itself. All the tones of ethics unite in wonderful harmonies, from the earliest vibrations in which resignation begins to take on an ethical timbre up to the high notes in which ethic passes over into the confused clamour of social convictions which are called ethical by society.

Ethics, then, is the subjective, extensively and intensively limitless responsibility for all life within his sphere of influence, which is felt by the man who becomes inwardly free from the world, and which he seeks to actualize. It is rooted in world- and life-affirmation. It works itself out in world- and life-negation. As it emerges from within it is bound up with optimistic volition. Belief in progress can no longer get loose and fall away from ethics as a badly secured wheel does from a waggon. Both run on the same axle and remain inseparable.

The fundamental principle of ethics, which is at once a necessity for thought, has real content, and has come to a permanently vital and practical understanding with objective reality, is expressed by the following formula : *self-sacrifice for the sake of other life motived by reverence for life itself.*

CHAPTER XXI

THE ETHIC OF REVERENCE FOR LIFE

The fundamental principle of morality. The ethic of resignation. The ethic of sincerity with regard to self and of activism in relation to others Ethics and lack of thought. Ethics and the independence of the individual existence Man and non-human animals. The ethic of human relations. Personal and supra-personal responsibility Ethics and human kindness

OUR ethical thought, which has gone astray and lost itself in its attempts to soar too high, must be brought back along complicated and difficult tracks. But its course will be rendered simple if henceforth, instead of turning aside into what are apparently easy short cuts, it keeps steadily on in the right direction. There are three conditions necessary to this end : firstly, it must not have any truck with the supposed ethical significance of the objective world ; secondly, it must become cosmic and mystic, that is to say, it must strive to comprehend all the self-sacrifice which obtains in the ethical realm as the expression of an inner and spiritual relation to the world ; thirdly, it must not degenerate into abstract thought, but must remain elemental, in that it conceives self-sacrifice for the sake of the world as a sacrifice of human life for the sake of all living existence with which it is able to come in contact.

Ethics originates in my thinking out completely, and trying to actualize, the world-affirmation which is innate in my will-to-live.

To be ethical is to think truly.

Thought is the accommodation between willing and knowing which takes place in me. It is dissipated in a crude fashion and loses its effect, if the will demands of the intellect that it should be shown a world which corresponds to the impulses which it finds inborn in itself, and if the

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intellect attempts to meet this demand. For this colloquy, destined as a matter of course to be void of result, the correct one must be substituted, in which the will only asks the intellect for what the latter understands and can supply.

If the intellect only expresses what it understands, it will gradually teach the will one and the same piece of knowledge, namely, that behind and in all phenomena is the will-to-live. The intellect, becoming continually more penetrating and more comprehensive, can do nothing but lead us ever deeper and ever farther into the mysterious and enigmatic truth that all that is, is will-to-live. Progress in scientific knowledge consists only in the facts that it describes with more and more exactitude the phenomena in which the multiform life issues, that it allows us to discover life where we had previously supposed that none existed, and that it places us in a position where we can make use in one way or another of the recognized working out in nature of the will-to-live. But no science can tell us what life itself really is.

The result of knowledge then, from the standpoint of world- and life-view, is only that it makes it difficult for us to avoid reflection in that it presses ever more strongly on our notice the mystery of the will-to-live which is everywhere dominant. Accordingly the distinction between learned and unlearned is a purely relative one. The unlearned man who, contemplating a tree covered with blossoms, is stirred by the mystery of the will-to-live which rules in all around him, is wiser and really knows more than the scientist who studies a thousand forms of this same will-to-live under the microscope or in physical and chemical processes, but yet, in spite of all his knowledge of the way in which its phenomena run their courses, remains unaffected by the mystery of the fact that all that is, is will-to-live, but is satisfied with the mere superficial impression of his own ability to describe accurately a tiny fragment of the phenomena attendant on life.

All knowledge worthy of the name passes over into experience. I do not know what the essential nature

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underlying phenomena really is, but I conceive it by analogy with the will-to-live which exists in myself. And so knowledge of the world becomes for me experience of the world. Cognition, thus continually passing into experience, does not allow me to remain a subjective being possessing a purely theoretical knowledge of the objective world, but forces me into an inner relationship with it. It fills me with reverence in face of the mysterious will-to-live which informs everything. And as it causes me to reflect and to wonder, so it leads me ever higher on to the heights of reverence for life. Here it lets go of my hand. It can conduct me no farther. My own will-to-live must now seek its way in the world by itself.

Knowledge does not bring me into relation with the world by showing me what these or those phenomena of life signify in the totality of the world. It is in the inner circles that it journeys with me, and not merely amidst external appearances. It places me in connection with the world from within outwards in that it helps my own will-to-live to know by actual experience that all that surrounds it is also will-to-live.

Descartes tells us that philosophizing is based on the judgment : "I think, therefore I am." From this meagre and arbitrarily selected beginning it is inevitable that it should wander into the path of the abstract. It does not find the entrance to the ethical realm, and remains held fast in a dead view of the world and of life. True philosophy must commence with the most immediate and comprehensive facts of consciousness. And this may be formulated as follows : "I am life which wills to live, and I exist in the midst of life which wills to live." This is no mere excoxitated subtlety. Day after day and hour after hour I proceed on my way invested in it. In every moment of reflection it forces itself on me anew. A living world- and life-view, informing all the facts of life, gushes forth from it continually, as from an eternal spring. A mystically ethical oneness with existence grows forth from it unceasingly.

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Just as in my own will-to-live there is a yearning for more life, and for that mysterious exaltation of the will-to-live which is called pleasure, and terror in face of annihilation and that injury to the will-to-live which is called pain ; so the same obtains in all the will-to-live around me, equally whether it can express itself to my comprehension or whether it remains unvoiced.

Ethics thus consists in this, that I experience the necessity of practising the same reverence for life toward all will-to-live, as toward my own. Therein I have already the needed fundamental principle of morality. It is *good* to maintain and cherish life ; it is *evil* to destroy and to check life.

As a matter of fact, everything which in the usual ethical valuation of inter-human relations is looked upon as good can be traced back to the material and spiritual maintenance or enhancement of human life and to the effort to raise it to its highest level of value. And contrariwise everything in human relations which is considered as evil, is in the final analysis found to be material or spiritual destruction or checking of human life and slackening of the effort to raise it to its highest value. Individual concepts of good and evil which are widely divergent and apparently unconnected fit into one another like pieces which belong together, the moment they are comprehended and their essential nature is grasped in this general notion.

The fundamental principle of morality which we seek as a necessity for thought is not, however, a matter only of arranging and deepening current views of good and evil, but also of expanding and extending these. A man is really ethical only when he obeys the constraint laid on him to help all life which he is able to succour, and when he goes out of his way to avoid injuring anything living. He does not ask how far this or that life deserves sympathy as valuable in itself, nor how far it is capable of feeling. To him life as such is sacred. He shatters no ice crystal that sparkles in the sun, tears no leaf from its tree, breaks off no flower, and is careful not to crush any insect as he walks.

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If he works by lamplight on a summer evening, he prefers to keep the window shut and to breathe stifling air, rather than to see insect after insect fall on his table with singed and sinking wings.

If he goes out into the street after a rainstorm and sees a worm which has strayed there, he reflects that it will certainly dry up in the sunshine, if it does not quickly regain the damp soil into which it can creep, and so he helps it back from the deadly paving stones into the lush grass. Should he pass by an insect which has fallen into a pool, he spares the time to reach it a leaf or stalk on which it may clamber and save itself.

He is not afraid of being laughed at as sentimental. It is indeed the fate of every truth to be an object of ridicule when it is first acclaimed. It was once considered foolish to suppose that coloured men were really human beings and ought to be treated as such. What was once foolishness has now become a recognized truth. To-day it is considered as exaggeration to proclaim constant respect for every form of life as being the serious demand of a rational ethic. But the time is coming when people will be amazed that the human race was so long before it recognized that thoughtless injury to life is incompatible with real ethics. Ethics is in its unqualified form extended responsibility with regard to everything that has life.

The general idea of ethics as a partaking of the mental atmosphere of reverence for life is not perhaps attractive. But it is the only complete notion possible. Mere sympathy is too narrow a concept to serve as the intellectual expression of the ethical element. It denotes, indeed, only a sharing of the suffering of the will-to-live. But to be ethical is to share the whole experience of all the circumstances and aspirations of the will-to-live, to live with it in its pleasures, in its yearnings, in its struggles toward perfection.

Love is a more inclusive term; since it signifies fellowship in suffering, in joy, and in effort. But it describes the ethical element only as it were by a simile, however natural

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and profound that simile may be. It places the solidarity created by ethics in analogy to that which nature has caused to come into being in a more or less superficial physical manner, and with a view to the fulfilment of their destiny, between two sexually attracted existences, or between these and their offspring.

Thought must strive to find a formula for the essential nature of the ethical. In so doing it is led to characterize ethics as self-devotion for the sake of life, motived by reverence for life. Although the phrase "reverence for life" may perhaps sound a trifle unreal, yet that which it denotes is something which never lets go its hold of the man in whose thought it has once found a place. Sympathy, love, and, in general, all enthusiastic feeling of real value are summed up in it. It works with restless vitality on the mental nature in which it has found a footing and flings this into the restless activity of a responsibility which never ceases and stops nowhere. Reverence for life drives a man on as the whirling thrashing screw forces a ship through the water.

The ethic of reverence for life, arising as it does out of an inward necessity, is not dependent on the question as to how far or how little it is capable of development into a satisfactory view of life. It does not need to prove that the action of ethical men, as directed to maintaining, enhancing and exalting life, has any significance for the total course of the world-process. Nor is it disturbed by the consideration that the preservation and enhancement of life which it practises are of almost no account at all beside the mighty destruction of life which takes place every moment as the result of natural forces. Determined as it is to act, it is yet able to ignore all the problems raised as to the result of its action. The fact that in the man who has become ethical a will informed by reverence for life and self-sacrifice for the sake of life exists in the world, is itself significant for the world.

The universal will-to-live experiences itself in my personal will-to-live otherwise than it does in other phenomena. For

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here it enters on an individualization, which, so far as I am able to gather in trying to view it from the outside, struggles only to live itself out, and not at all to become one with will-to-live external to itself. The world is indeed the grisly drama of will-to-live at variance with itself. One existence survives at the expense of another of which it yet knows nothing. But in me the will-to-live has become cognizant of the existence of other will-to-live. There is in it a yearning for unity with itself, a longing to become universal.

Why is it that the will-to-live has this experience only in myself? Is it a result of my having become capable of reflection about the totality of existence? Whither will the evolution lead which has thus begun in me?

There is no answer to these questions. It remains a painful enigma how I am to live by the rule of reverence for life in a world ruled by creative will which is at the same time destructive will, and by destructive will which is also creative.

I can do no other than hold on to the fact that the will-to-live appears in me as will-to-live which aims at becoming one with other will-to-live. This fact is the light which shines for me in the darkness. My ignorance regarding the real nature of the objective world no longer troubles me. I am set free from the world. I have been cast by my reverence for life into a state of unrest foreign to the world. By this, too, I am placed in a state of beatitude which the world cannot give. If in the happiness induced by our independence of the world I and another afford each other mutual help in understanding and in forgiveness, when otherwise will would harass other will, then the will-to-live is no longer at variance with itself. If I rescue an insect from a pool of water, then life has given itself for life, and again the self-contradiction of the will-to-live has been removed. Whenever my life has given itself out in any way for other life, my eternal will-to-live experiences union with the eternal, since all life is one. I possess a cordial which secures me from dying of thirst in the desert of life.

Therefore I recognize it as the destiny of my existence to

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be obedient to the higher revelation of the will-to-live which I find in myself. I choose as my activity the removal of the self-contradiction of the will-to-live, as far as the influence of my own existence extends. Knowing as I do the one thing needful, I am content to offer no opinion about the enigma of the objective world and my own being.

Thought becomes religious when it thinks itself out to the end. The ethic of reverence for life is the ethic of Jesus brought to philosophical expression, extended into cosmical form, and conceived as intellectually necessary.

The surmising and longing of all deeply religious personalities is comprehended and contained in the ethic of reverence for life. This, however, does not build up a world-view as a completed system, but resigns itself to leave the cathedral perforce incomplete. It is only able to finish the choir. Yet in this true piety celebrates a living and continuous divine service. . . .

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The ethic of reverence for life also proves its own truth by the way in which it comprehends and includes the most various forms of the ethical impulse. No ethical system has yet proved capable of presenting the effort to attain self-perfection, in which man works on his own being without any action directed externally, on the one hand, and the activist ethic on the other hand, in connection and interrelation. The ethic of reverence for life accomplishes this, and in such a way that it does not merely solve an academic problem, but brings with it a real deepening of ethical insight.

Ethics is in fact reverence for the will-to-live both within and without my own personality. The immediate product of reverence for the will-to-live which I find in myself is the profound life-affirmation of resignation. I comprehend my will-to-live not only as something which lives itself out in fortunate moments of success, but also as something which is conscious of itself and its own experiences. If I do not allow this experiencing of myself to be dissipated by

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heedless lack of reflection, but, on the contrary, deliberately pause in it as one who feels its real value, I am rewarded by a disclosure of the secret of spiritual independence. I become a partaker in an unguessed-at freedom amid the destinies of life. At moments when I should otherwise have thought myself to be overwhelmed and crushed, I feel myself uplifted in a state of inexpressible joy, astounding to myself, in which I am conscious of freedom from the world and experience a clarifying of my whole view of life. Resignation is the vestibule through which we pass in entering the palace of ethics. Only he who experiences inner freedom from external events in profound surrender to his own will-to-live is capable of the profound and permanent surrender of himself for the sake of other life.

As I struggle for freedom from the external occurrences of life in reverence for my own will-to-live, so also do I wrestle for freedom from myself. I practise the higher independence not only with regard to that which happens to me personally, but also in respect to the way in which I behave towards the world.

As the result of reverence for my own existence I force myself to be sincere with myself. Anything that I acquire by acting contrary to my convictions is bought too dearly. I am afraid of wounding my will-to-live with poisoned spears by disloyalty to my own personality.

That Kant places sincerity toward oneself in the very centre of his ethical system is a witness to the profundity of his own ethical perception. But he is unable to grasp the connection between self-sincerity and activist ethics because in his search for the essential nature of the ethical he never gets as far as the idea of reverence for life.

In actual practice the ethic of self-sincerity passes over unconsciously into that of self-sacrifice for others. Sincerity toward myself forces me to acts which appear so much like self-sacrifice that the current ethic derives them from this latter impulse.

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Why do I forgive my fellow-man ? The current ethic says that it is because I sympathize with him. It presents men as impossibly good when they forgive, and allows them to practise a kind of forgiveness which is really humiliating to the person forgiven. Thus it turns forgiveness into a sort of sweetened triumph of self-sacrifice.

The ethic of reverence for life clears away these obscure and misty notions. All forbearance and forgiveness is for it an act to which it is compelled by sincerity towards itself. I am obliged to exercise unlimited forgiveness because, if I did not forgive, I should be untrue to myself, in that I should thus act as if I were not guilty in the same way as the other has been guilty with regard to me. I must forgive the lies directed against myself, because my own life has been so many times blotted by lies ; I must forgive the lovelessness, the hatred, the slander, the fraud, the arrogance which I encounter, since I myself have so often lacked love, hated, slandered, defrauded, and been arrogant. I must forgive without noise or fuss. In general I do not forgive, I do not even get as far as being merely just. And this also is no exaggeration, but a necessary extension and refinement of our usual ethic.

We have to conduct the fight against the evil element which exists in man, not by judging others, but only by judging ourselves. The conflict with our own nature, and sincerity towards ourselves, are the instruments with which we work on others. We move silently into the midst of the struggle for that profound spiritual independence which grows from reverence for our own life. True power makes no noise. It is there, and it produces its effect. True ethic begins where the use of words stops.

The most essential element of activist ethics, even if it does appear as surrender, is thus a product of the impulse to sincerity towards oneself, and in that is contained its real value. The whole ethic of independence from the world only runs as a clear stream when it issues from this source. I am not gentle, peaceable, patient and friendly from a kindly disposition towards others, but because I thus secure

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the most profound independence. There is an indissoluble connection between the reverence for life with which I face my own existence, and that in which I relate myself to others in acts of self-sacrifice.

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It is because the current ethic possesses no fundamental principle of morality that it plunges immediately into the discussion of various conflicting opinions in the ethical realm. The ethic of reverence for life is in no hurry to do this. It takes its own time to think out its fundamental moral principle on all sides. Then, complete in itself, it takes up its own position with regard to these conflicts.

Ethics has to come to an understanding with three opponents ; with lack of thought, with egoistic independence, and with the community.

Of the first of these, ethics has not usually taken sufficient account, because it never comes to any open conflict between the two. But, unnoticed, this opponent is constantly on the offensive.

Ethics can take possession of an extensive tract without encountering the troops of egoism. A man can do a great deal of good without being obliged to sacrifice his own interests or desires. Even if he does lose a little bit of his own life in so doing, it is such an insignificant fragment that he misses it no more than he would a single hair or a tiny scale of skin.

To a very large extent the attainment of inner freedom from the world, loyalty to one's own being, existence in distinction from the world, even self-sacrifice for the sake of other life, is only a matter of concentrating attention on this relation. We miss so much of it because we do not keep steadfastly to the point. We do not place ourselves directly under the pressure of the inner impulse to ethical existence. Steam spurts out in all directions from a leaky

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boiler. The losses of energy on every side are so great in the current ethic because it has at its command no single fundamental moral principle which can act on its thought. It cannot make its boiler steam-tight, nay, it does not even thoroughly inspect it. But reverence for life, which is always present to thought, informs and penetrates, continually and in every direction, a man's observation, reflection and decisions. He can as little resist this process as water can hinder the dyestuff dropped into it from tinting it. The struggle with lack of thought is a conscious process and is always going on.

How does the ethic of reverence for life stand in the conflicts which arise between the inner impulse to self-sacrifice and necessary self-maintenance?

I also am subject to the variance with itself of the will-to-live. My existence is in conflict at a thousand points with that of others. The necessity is laid upon me of destroying and injuring life. If I walk along a lonely road my foot brings annihilation and pain on the tiny beings which people it. In order to maintain my own existence I am obliged to protect it from the existences which would harm it. I become a persecutor of the little mouse which inhabits my dwelling, a destroyer of the insect which desires to breed there, no less than a wholesale murderer of the bacteria which may endanger my life. I can only secure nourishment for myself by destroying animals and plants. My own good fortune is built on the injuries and hardships of my fellow-men.

How is ethics to exist at all amid the gruesome necessities to which I am a slave because the will-to-live is at variance with itself?

The current ethic seeks for a compromise. It tries to lay down rules as to how much of my own existence and of my own happiness I must give up, and how much I may continue to hold at the expense of the existence and happiness of other life. In so deciding it creates an experimental and relative ethic. That which is actually not ethical at all, but is a hotch-potch of non-ethical necessity and of

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real ethics, gives itself out as genuinely ethical and normative. Thus a monstrous confusion arises, and thereby a constantly increasing obscuration of the notion of the ethical element.

The ethic of reverence for life recognizes no such thing as a relative ethic. The maintenance and enhancement of life are the only things it counts as being good in themselves. All destruction of and injury to life, from whatever circumstances they may result, are reckoned by it as evil. It does not give place to ready-made accommodations of ethics and necessity which are too eager to occupy the ground. The absolute ethic of reverence makes its own agreements with the individual from moment to moment, agreements always fresh and always original and basic. It does not relieve him of the conflict, but rather forces him to decide for himself in each case how far he can remain ethical and how far he must submit himself to the necessity of destroying and harming life and thus become guilty. Man does not make ethical progress by assimilating instruction with regard to accommodations between the ethical and the necessary, but only by hearing ever more clearly the voice of the ethical element, by being ever more under the control of his own yearning to maintain and to enhance life, and by becoming ever more obstinate in his opposition to the necessity of destroying and injuring life.

In ethical conflicts it is only subjective decisions that a man has to face. No one else can determine for him where lies the utmost limit of the possibility of continuing to maintain and cherish life. He alone has to judge by allowing himself to be led by a sense of responsibility for other lives raised to the highest degree possible. We must never let this sense become dulled and blunted. In effect, however, we are doing so, if we are content to find the conflicts becoming continually more insoluble. The good conscience is an invention of the devil.

THE ETHIC OF REVERENCE FOR LIFE

What does reverence for life teach us about the relations of man and the non-human animals?

Whenever I injure life of any kind I must be quite clear as to whether this is necessary or not. I ought never to pass the limits of the unavoidable, even in apparently insignificant cases. The countryman who has mowed down a thousand blossoms in his meadow as fodder for his cows should take care that on the way home he does not, in wanton pastime, switch off the head of a single flower growing on the edge of the road, for in so doing he injures life without being forced to do so by necessity.

Those who test operations or drugs on animals, or who inoculate them with diseases so that they may be able to help human beings by means of the results thus obtained, ought never to rest satisfied with the general idea that their dreadful doings are performed in pursuit of a worthy aim. It is their duty to ponder in every separate case whether it is really and truly necessary thus to sacrifice an animal for humanity. They ought to be filled with anxious care to alleviate as much as possible the pain which they cause. How many outrages are committed in this way in scientific institutions where narcotics are often omitted to save time and trouble! How many also when animals are made to suffer agonizing tortures, only in order to demonstrate to students scientific truths which are perfectly well known. The very fact that the animal, as a victim of research, has in his pain rendered such services to suffering men, has itself created a new and unique relation of solidarity between him and ourselves. The result is that a fresh obligation is laid on each of us to do as much good as we possibly can to all creatures in all sorts of circumstances. When I help an insect out of his troubles all that I do is to attempt to remove some of the guilt contracted through these crimes against animals.

Wherever any animal is forced into the service of man, the sufferings which it has to bear on that account are the concern of every one of us. No one ought to permit, in so far as he can prevent it, pain or suffering for which he will not

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take the responsibility. No one ought to rest at ease in the thought that in so doing he would mix himself up in affairs which are not his business. Let no one shirk the burden of his responsibility. When there is so much maltreatment of animals, when the cries of thirsting creatures go up unnoticed from the railway trucks, when there is so much roughness in our slaughter-houses, when in our kitchens so many animals suffer horrible deaths from unskilful hands, when animals endure unheard-of agonies from heartless men, or are delivered to the dreadful play of children, then we are all guilty and must bear the blame.

We are afraid of shocking or offending by showing too plainly how deeply we are moved by the sufferings which man causes to the non-human creatures. We tend to reflect that others are more "rational" than we are, and would consider that which so disturbs us as customary and as a matter of course. And then, suddenly, they let fall some expression which shows us that they, too, are not really satisfied with the situation. Strangers to us hitherto, they are now quite near our own position. The masks, in which we had each concealed ourselves from the other, fall off. We now know that neither of us can cut ourselves free from the horrible necessity which plays ceaselessly around us. What a wonderful thing it is thus to get to know each other!

The ethic of reverence for life forbids any of us to deduce from the silence of our contemporaries that they, or in their case we, have ceased to feel what as thinking men we all cannot but feel. It prompts us to keep a mutual watch in this atmosphere of suffering and endurance, and to speak and act without panic according to the responsibility which we feel. It inspires us to join in a search for opportunities to afford help of some kind or other to the animals, to make up for the great amount of misery which they endure at our hands, and thus to escape for a moment from the inconceivable horrors of existence.

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But the ethic of reverence for life also places us in a position of fearful responsibility with regard to our relations to other men.

We find, again, that it offers us no teaching about the bounds of legitimate self-maintenance ; it calls us again to come to a separate understanding with the ethic of self-sacrifice in each individual case. According to the sense of responsibility which is my personal experience so I must decide what part of my life, my possessions, my rights, my happiness, my time or my rest, I ought to give up, and what part I ought to keep back.

Regarding the question of property, the ethic of reverence for life is outspokenly individualist in the sense that goods earned or inherited are to be placed at the disposition of the community, not according to any standards whatever laid down by society, but according to the absolutely free decision of the individual. It places all its hopes on the enhancement of the feeling of responsibility in men. It defines possessions as the property of the community, of which the individual is sovereign steward. One serves society by conducting a business from which a certain number of employees draw their means of sustenance ; another, by giving away his property in order to help his fellow-men. Each one will decide on his own course somewhere between these two extreme cases according to the sense of responsibility which is determined for him by the particular circumstances of his own life. No one is to judge others. It is a question of individual responsibility ; each is to value his possessions as instruments with which he is to work. It makes no difference whether the work is done by keeping and increasing, or by giving up, the property. Possessions must belong to the community in the most various ways, if they are to be used to the best advantage in its service.

Those who have very little that they can call their own are in most danger of becoming purely egoistic. A deep truth lies in the parable of Jesus, which makes the servant who had received least the least faithful of all.

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The ethic of reverence for life does not even allow me to possess my own rights absolutely. It does not allow me to rest in the thought that I, as the more capable, advance at the expense of the less capable. It presents to me as a problem what human law and opinion allow as a matter, of course. It prompts me to think of others and to ponder whether I can really allow myself the intrinsic right of plucking all the fruits which my hand is physically able to reach. And then it may occur that, following my regard for the existence of others, I do what appears as foolishness to the generality of men. It may, indeed, prove itself to have been actually foolishness in so far as my renunciation for the sake of others has really no useful effect. Yet all the same I was right in doing as I did. Reverence for life is the supreme motive. That which it commands has its own meaning, even if it seem foolish or useless. Indeed, we all really seek in one another for that sort of foolishness which shows that we are impelled by the higher responsibility. It is only as we become less rational in the ordinary sense of the word that the ethical disposition works out in us and solves problems previously insoluble.

Again, reverence for life does not allow me to appropriate my own happiness. At moments when I should like to enjoy myself without a care, it brings before me thoughts of the misery I have seen and surmised. It refuses to allow me to banish my uneasiness. Just as the wave has no existence of its own, but is part of the continual movement of the ocean, thus I also am destined never to experience my life as self-contained, but always as part of the experience which is going on around me. An uncomfortable doctrine prompts me in whispered words. You are happy, it says. Therefore you are called to give up much. Whatever you have received more than others, in health, in talents, in ability, in success, in a pleasant childhood, in harmonious conditions of home life, all this you must not take to yourself as a matter of course. You must pay a price for it. You must render in return an unusually great sacrifice of your life for other life. The voice of the true ethic is

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dangerous for the happy when they have the courage to listen to it. For them there is no quenching of the irrational fire which glows in it. It challenges them in an attempt to lead them away from the natural road, and to see whether it can make them the adventurers of self-sacrifice, of whom the world has too few. . . .

Reverence for life is an inexorable creditor! If it finds nothing else in a man which it can take as a pledge but a little time and a little leisure, it will still lay claim to these. But its hard-heartedness is really good, and sees clearly. The many human beings who to-day are employed as labour-producing machines in businesses which give them no opportunity of reacting as men on other men, are in danger of sliding into a mere vegetative egoistic existence. Many of them are conscious of this danger. They suffer from the fact that their daily work has so extremely little to do with spiritual and ideal aims, and does not permit them to infuse it with any of their human nature. There are others who find consolation and rest in this. The thought of having no duties outside their daily employment is comforting to them.

But the idea that men should ever be condemned to or favoured by being free from the responsibilities of self-sacrifice as men for men, is foreign to the ethic of reverence for life. It requires that in some way or other and in something or other we should all live as men for men. To those who have no opportunity for human relations in their ordinary work, and who have nothing else to give, it suggests that they should sacrifice some of their own time and leisure even when they have but very little of either. Take up some side-line, it says to them, some quite insignificant, perhaps even secret, side-line. Open your eyes and look for some man, or some work for the sake of men, which needs a little time, a little friendship, a little sympathy, a little sociability, a little human toil. Perhaps it is a lonely person, or an embittered person, or an invalid, or some unfortunate inefficient, to whom you can be something. It may be an old man or it may be a child. Or some good

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work is in want of volunteers who will devote a free evening to it or will run on errands for it. Who can reckon up all the ways in which that priceless fund of impulse, man, is capable of exploitation ! He is needed in every nook and corner. Therefore search and see if there is not some place where you may invest your humanity. Do not be put off if you find that you have to wait and to experiment. Be sure that you will have disappointments to endure. But do not be satisfied without some side-line in which you may give yourself out as a man to men. There is one waiting for you if only you are willing to take it up in the right spirit. . . .

So speaks the true ethic to those who have nothing to give but some time and some human kindness. Well for them if they listen to it and thus remain secure against becoming self-centred and disgruntled men because of missed opportunities for self-sacrifice.

But the ethic of reverence for life constrains all, in whatever walk of life they may find themselves, to busy themselves intimately with all the human and vital processes which are being played out around them, and to give themselves as men to the man who needs human help and sympathy. It does not allow the scholar to live for his science alone, even if he is very useful to the community in so doing. It does not permit the artist to exist only for his art, even if he gives inspiration to many by its means. It refuses to let the business man imagine that he fulfils all legitimate demands in the course of his business activities. It demands from all that they should sacrifice a portion of their own lives for others. In what way and in what measure this is his duty, this every one must decide on the basis of the thoughts which arise in himself, and the circumstances which attend the course of his own life. The self-sacrifice of one may not be particularly in evidence. He carries it out simply by continuing his normal life. Another is called to some striking self-surrender which obliges him to set on one side all regard for his own progress. Let no one measure himself by his conclusions respecting

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some one else. The destiny of men has to fulfil itself in a thousand ways, so that goodness may be actualized. What every individual has to contribute remains his own secret. But we must all mutually share in the knowledge that our existence only attains its true value when we have experienced in ourselves the truth of the declaration : " He who loses his life shall find it."

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Ethical conflicts between society and the individual continue to exist because the individual has not only a personal but also a supra-personal sense of responsibility. Where my own person only is in question I can always be patient, always forgive, always be sympathetic, always be compassionate. But we all have the experience of being placed in positions where we are responsible not only for ourselves but also for some affair or business, and are then forced to make decisions which run counter to personal morality. The manufacturer who directs a business, be it ever such a small one ; the musician who conducts performances ; these can no longer remain human beings merely, however much they would prefer to do so. The one must dismiss an inefficient or drunken workman, in spite of all the sympathy which he may feel with him and his family ; the other must prevent a singer whose voice has given way from taking any further part, however much pain this may cause to her.

The more comprehensive is a man's activity the more he comes into the position of being obliged to surrender some portion of his humanity to his supra-personal responsibility. Current thought usually tries to escape from this dilemma by laying down as a dogma that personal responsibility is covered and superseded by that of society in general. In this way the community tries to console the individual. For the comfort of those to whom this dogma seems too categorical it may perhaps add certain other principles which undertake to determine in a universally valid manner

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to what extent personal morality has ever a right to interfere.

Current ethics cannot possibly avoid subscription to this surrender. It has not the means for defending the stronghold of personal morality, since it has no absolute notions of good and evil at its disposal. Not so the ethic of reverence for life. It is in actual possession of what the other lacks. Therefore it never surrenders the fortress, even when this is in a state of constant siege. It feels itself capable of holding it permanently, and of keeping the besiegers in a breathless condition by making repeated sallies.

Only that entirely universal and absolute purposiveness with regard to the maintenance and enhancement of life, which is the aim of reverence for life, is really ethical. All other necessity or purposiveness is not ethical, but more or less urgent necessity or more or less purposive purposiveness. In the conflict which goes on between the maintenance of my own existence and the destruction and injury of other existence, I can never unite the ethical and the necessary in a relatively ethical, but must always make my own decision between what is ethical and what is necessary, and, if I choose the latter, must shoulder the guilt of having injured life. Similarly, I may never imagine that in the struggle between personal and supra-personal responsibility it is possible to make a compromise between the ethical and the purposive in the shape of a relative ethic, or to let the ethical be superseded by the purposive. On the contrary, it is my duty to make my own decision as between the two. If, under the pressure of supra-personal responsibility, I surrender to the purposive, I am guilty to some extent through my failure to uphold the principle of reverence for life.

The attempt to combine in a relative ethic the purposive, dictated by supra-personal responsibility, and the really ethical, is particularly blatant, because it logically follows that the man who obeys the commands of supra-personal responsibility is acting unegoistically. He does not

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sacrifice the existence or well-being of others in favour of his own, but of that which is imposed on him as purposive in view of the existence or well-being of a majority. But to be ethical is more important than to be unegoistic! Only the reverence of my will-to-live for every other will-to-live is genuinely ethical. Whenever I sacrifice or injure life in any way I am not ethical, but rather I am guilty, whether it be egoistically guilty for the sake of maintaining my own existence or well-being, or unegoistically guilty with a view to maintaining those of a majority.

This mistake, so easy to fall into, of reckoning as ethical the violation of reverence for life which is based on unegoistic considerations, is the bridge over which the ethical passes unnoticed into the region of the unethical. This bridge must be destroyed.

Ethics can go no farther than does humaneness or human-kindness, that is, regard for the existence and happiness of individual human beings. Where humaneness stops, pseudo-ethics begins. The day on which this boundary is generally recognized and clearly marked out will be one of the most significant in the history of humanity. From that moment it will no longer be possible for an ethic which is not really ethical at all to pass as ethical, and to befool and ruin men and nations. In that the ethic which has obtained hitherto has deceived us and blinded us to the manifold ways in which each one of us is constantly guilty, whether in self-protection or by action in accordance with supra-personal responsibility, it has prevented us from being as earnest as we ought to have been. True knowledge consists in being deeply impressed by the mystery that everything around us is will-to-live and in realizing how guilty we continually are of offences against life.

Befooled by pseudo-ethics, man staggers around in a maze of guilt like one intoxicated. When he has received enlightenment and become earnest and sincere he seeks the way which will as seldom as possible lead him into such guilt.

The attempt to avoid the guilt of lack of humanity,

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which results from action in accordance with supra-personal responsibility, by withdrawing into ourselves as much as possible, is common to us all. But such an innocence is stolen. Ethics, because it is rooted in world- and life-affirmation, does not permit this flight into world-negation. It forbids us to be like the housewife who leaves the killing of the eel to her cook. On the contrary, it forces us to undertake all the duties of supra-personal responsibility, which we see before us, even when we could avoid them on more or less convincing grounds. Thus every one of us is under the obligation, in so far as he is led thereto by the circumstances of his own life, to engage in acts of supra-personal responsibility. But we are not to do this as the result of a mental atmosphere informed by the idea of collectivity, but rather in that characterized by a desire to become ethical human beings. In each particular case we strive to infuse as much humaneness as possible into these actions necessitated by supra-personal responsibility. And in doubtful cases we prefer to risk a mistake in favour of humaneness than one in favour of some definite aim. Having become enlightened and earnest we reflect, what people do not generally think of, that all action which is in any way public has not only to do with matters of fact which are to be actualized in the interests of the total community, but also with the creation of a mental atmosphere which is desirable for that community. The latter, because it is permanent and is itself productive of material actions, is more important than that which issues immediately in such actions. Public actions in which the effort to preserve humaneness is not carried out to its extreme limit are the ruin of this mental atmosphere. Whoever makes sacrifices simply for men and the happiness of men, according to a course which seems to be suggested by supra-personal responsibility, attains something. But he does not reach the height of true usefulness. He has only external, and no spiritual, power. We only possess true power when men notice that we do not coldly decide

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on our line of conduct according to principles laid down once for all, but that we struggle in each individual case to maintain our own Humanity. There is too little of such struggling amongst us. From the lowliest man, who is a member of the lowliest calling, up to the controller of political events, who holds war and peace in his hands, we act too much as men who are prepared in a given case to be, without making any effort to the contrary, no longer men in any true sense, but only trustees and executors of general interests. Thus there is no longer among us any belief in the existence of justice and righteousness tempered by human-kindness. Equally we have lost all real respect for one another. We all feel ourselves delivered over to be the slaves of a cold opportunist-mentality, petrified in its principles, impersonal, and usually unintelligent, a mentality which is capable of the greatest inhumanity and stupidity in order to serve the most petty material interests. Thus with us one set of ideas characterized by impersonal opportunism is up against another of the same type. All our problems become matter for a purposeless strife of forces, because there is no general mental disposition such as would render them soluble.

It is only by our struggling to maintain the dictates of humanity that the forces which work in the direction of the truly rational and purposive can attain influence on our general mental atmosphere. And so the man who acts in accordance with supra-personal responsibility must learn to feel himself responsible not only for the results which are to be actualized, but also for the mental disposition which will accrue, through his action.

In this way we serve the community without losing ourselves in it. We do not allow it to be our guardian or to speak for us in matters of ethics. To do so would be like the solo-violinist allowing the orchestral seconds to dictate his time. We should never for a moment lay aside our distrust of the ideals set up by society or the convictions which it keeps in circulation. We know that it is always full of foolishness and trying to deceive us about humani-

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tarian questions. It is a horse at once unreliable and blind. Woe to the driver if he goes to sleep !

All this is, perhaps, too severe, a diatribe. Society performs a real ethical service in that it provides legal sanctions for the most elementary ethical principles and carries ethical ideas over from one generation to another. In so doing it does much and has a claim on our gratitude. But it is also society which continually checks the progress of ethics by arrogating to itself the position of ethical educator. This it has no real claim to be. Only the ethically thinking man who struggles to develop a true ethic is an ethical educator. The ideas respecting good and evil which are put into circulation by society are paper-money whose worth is to be measured, not according to the figure printed on it, but according to its relation to the gold currency of the ethic of reverence for life. Hence it follows that the ethical currency of society is comparable to that of a half-bankrupt state.

The collapse of civilization has come about because we left the whole question of ethics to society. An ethical revival will only be possible when ethics again becomes the business of thinking men and when individuals seek to maintain themselves in the community as ethical personalities. According to the measure in which we succeed in securing this, will society be transformed from what it is now from top to bottom, a purely natural body, into an ethical organism. The generations which preceded us have made the dire mistake of idealizing society in an ethical sense. We, on the contrary, do our duty by the community by judging it critically and seeking to make it, as far as we are able, more ethical. Having now an *absolute* ethical criterion we no longer allow principles of purposiveness or even, as previously, the most blatantly vulgar opportunism, to pose as ethical without protest on our part. Neither do we linger in the crassly stupid position where we permit ideals of brute force, of passion, or of nationalism, set up by paltry politicians and kept before the public by

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mind-deafening propaganda, to continue any longer to pose as ethical. With a sort of splendid pedantry we measure all the principles, mental dispositions and ideals which arise among us with the rule gauged for us by the absolute ethic of reverence for life. We can only allow as genuine that which is compatible with humanitarianism. We again extalt the standard of regard for the life and happiness of the individual. We proclaim the sacred rights of humanity ; not those which political big-wigs extol at banquets, and trample under foot in the sphere of real action, but the true and genuine rights. We again demand justice, not that substitute for it which purblind authorities have elaborated in juridical scholasticism, nor that about which demagogues of all colours and complexions shriek themselves hoarse, but that which is inspired by a sense of the value of every human existence.

Thus we bring the principles, beliefs and ideals of society in general into a definite understanding with the dictates of humanity. And in so doing we give them a rational form, for only the truly ethical is really rational. It is only in so far as ethical convictions and ideals have being in the current mental disposition of society that this is capable of acting in a genuinely purposive manner.

The ethic of reverence for life puts into our hands weapons with which to combat false ethics and false ideals. But we have only power to wield these in so far as we cherish humanitarian ideas—each of us in his own individual life. It is only as men who combine humanity with actuality in both thought and action become numerous, that such humanity or humanitarianism will cease to be looked on as a sentimental idea, and will become what it ought to be and is destined to be, the leaven of the mental disposition of the individual and of the community.

CHAPTER XXII

THE ETHIC OF REVERENCE FOR LIFE AND ITS CREATIVE FORCE WITH REFERENCE TO CIVILIZATION

Civilization as a product of reverence for life. The four civilization-ideals. The struggle to preserve civilized personalities in a mechanical era. Church and state as historical existences and as ideals of civilization. The spiritualizing and ethicizing of human religious and political associations.

REVERENCE for life, based on the will-to-live—which has become conscious and reflective—contains in itself both world- and life-affirmation and also ethics, united in perfect consonance. Thus the thinking and the willing of all the ethical ideals of civilization flow naturally from it, and through it become ever more closely adjusted to objective reality.

The purely individualist and subjective notion of civilization, which is the controlling factor in Indian thought and in mysticism in general, has no place for this reverence for life. Its profound but imperfect ideal of civilization is that man should aspire to self-fulfilment through introspection.

Reverence for life never allows the individual to give up his interest in the world. It is continually urging him to take part in all the life around him, and to feel himself responsible for it. Wherever any life is in question whose development comes at all within the scope of our influence, our partaking in it, and our responsibility with regard to it, are not limited only to the preservation and fostering of its existence as such. It is further asked of us that we should strive to bring it to its highest degree of value in every respect. The part of existence whose development we are able to influence is man. Reverence for life thus necessarily involves for us the devising and willing of every kind and degree of progress of which man and humanity are capable. Thus it throws us into an atmosphere of never-

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resting thought and action for the sake of civilization, but withal as ethical men.

It is true that crude world- and life-affirmation also produces thought and action for the sake of civilization, but it leaves man to toil along more or less without guidance. In reverence for life and the good will which comes with it, and which is directed toward raising men and humanity to their highest level of value in every respect, he possesses the orientation which conducts him to complete articulate ideals of civilization, ideals which are conscious of their own aims and have come to an effective understanding with objective reality.

Defined purely empirically, from the outside, civilization, as a thing integral and unmixed, consists in the actualization of all intrinsically possible forms of progress, of knowledge, of power, and of human association and organization, and in the co-operation of these to produce the inner perfection of the individual, as being the true and final aim of civilization. Reverence for life is in the position to actualize completely this concept of civilization, and to give it a firm foundation based on an understanding of its inmost essence.

It does this in that it conceives the inner perfection of man as a matter of content, and makes it consist in the attainment of a spirituality measured by its continually deepening veneration for life.

In order to be able to attribute a real sense to effective material and spiritual forms of progress, both of man and of humanity, the usual idea of civilization must take for granted a stage of world-development in which these are full of genuine meaning, and in doing so it becomes entirely dependent on a barren phantasy. It is not possible to imagine a transformation of the world such that the actualized civilization of man and of humanity would attain a real significance in it.

Once immersed in reverence for life, civilization recognizes that it has no direct connection with world-development as such, but carries its own significance in itself. The real

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essence of civilization consists in the continual struggle to develop itself in the individual man and in humanity, of that reverence for life which is always trying to make its influence felt in the will-to-live. Civilization is thus not a phenomenon of objective world-development, but rather an adventure of the subjective will-to-live which we cannot connect with objective occurrences as we know these externally—nor, in fact, do we need to do so. As the perfect state of our will-to-live it is sufficient in itself. We may leave on one side as inscrutable the question of what the development which takes place in us signifies in the totality of world-development. That as a consequence of all the progress attainable in the world by individuals and by humanity as much will-to-live as possible should be developed, which in its turn should manifest reverence for life in its dealings with all the life within its sphere of action, and should seek its own fulfilment in the spiritual nature produced by reverence for life ; this, and nothing else, is civilization. It carries its own value in itself to such an extent that even the certainty that the human race will cease to exist within a measurable space of time would be unable to deter us from our effort to attain civilization.

Civilization has indeed a world-significance as an evolution in which the highest experience of the will-to-live comes into being ; but it has no need whatever of a world explanation.

The will-to-live which is informed by reverence for life is interested in the most vital and permanent way imaginable in all the different lines of progress. In this reverence it possesses a standard which enables it to weigh these correctly, and it can thus create a general attitude of mind in society which allows them all to co-operate with a high degree of purposiveness.

There are three lines of progress which we have to consider when speaking of civilization : progress in knowledge and power, progress in the organization of human society,

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progress in spirituality. There are four main civilization ideals : the ideal of the individual personality, the ideal of social and political association, the ideal of spiritual religious association, the ideal of humanity. It is on the basis of these four ideals that thought has to come to a clear understanding with the lines of progress.

Progress in knowledge, when it comes to be worked out intellectually, has a direct spiritual significance. The farther we go along this line of progress, the clearer it becomes that everything which exists is energy, that is, will-to-live ; it constantly widens for us the sphere and scope of the general will-to-live which we can comprehend by analogy with our own. We are reflecting and philosophizing about the world. What is the significance, for the result of our reflection, of the fact that we have discovered in the simple cell a living individuality in whose capability to do and to suffer we see mirrored the rudiments of our own vital existence ? As our knowledge grows and widens we are continually more and more amazed at the secret of life which involves us on all sides. We proceed from crude simplicity to what we can only describe paradoxically as an attitude of profound simplicity—from mere ignorance to conscious mystification.

But knowledge also yields power over the forces of nature. Our mobility and activity are raised to an unbelievably high power. An extensive alteration of our environment takes place.

Yet the lines of progress which accompany this extension are by no means necessarily all advantageous for the development of the individual. We cut ourselves free from nature by means of the power which we exert over natural forces ; we even make her in turn our servant. But in so doing we lose our connection with her and enter into a universe of environmental conditions whose unnaturalness is fraught with manifold dangers. We force nature to work for us by means of mechanical devices. In the writings of Chuang-tzü it is related that when one of Confucius'

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scholars saw a gardener who was making journey after journey to the well with a single bucket in order to fetch water for his flower borders, he asked him whether he would not like to have his labour lightened. "How so?" replied the gardener. The scholar answered, "Take a long wooden lever thick and heavy at one end and thin at the other. In this way it is possible to arrange matters so that the water will be forced up without this constant stooping on your part. That's what they call a draw-well." But the gardener, who was a sage, responded, "I have heard my teachers say that if any one makes use of machines he gets into the way of doing all his business mechanically, and the man who does his business mechanically gets to have a machine-like heart; but if a man has a machine-like heart in his breast he has lost his grasp of pure unity, and becomes involved in complexity."

The dangers foreseen by that gardener of the fifth century B.C. surround us and weigh on us now in their full severity. Purely mechanical toil has become the lot of many around us. Without house or cultivable land of their own they live in an oppressive material slavery. Through the transformation wrought by machinery we have almost all become subjected to a too much regulated, too much restricted, and too strained atmosphere of toil. Self-composure and serenity have become difficult. Family life and education are suffering. We are all more or less in danger of becoming human things instead of personalities. In very many directions material and spiritual damage to human existence is thus the dark side of our progress in knowledge and power.

Even our very capability for civilization is being called in question. Many of us are no longer in a position to produce or to conceive civilization-ideals, since all our time and energy are used up in the desperate struggle for bare existence. Such people have no longer the power to think objectively. All their mental efforts are directed to the amelioration of their own existence. They give out as

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civilization-ideals the aims which they follow from necessity, aims which have to do merely with maintaining their own lives, and thence arises confusion in our conceptions of what civilization is.

In order to be a match for the situation which has grown up as a result of all our advances in knowledge and power, both advantageous and harmful, we must think out quite clearly our ideal of human personality, and must wrestle with circumstances so as to oblige them to hinder as little as possible the development of man toward this ideal, and to forward the same as much as possible.

The ideal of the civilized man is nothing else than that of the man who demonstrates and practises the truly humane nature in all the relations of life. To be civilized men is for us practically the same thing as remaining human and humane beings in spite of the environment created by modern so-called civilization. Only careful reflection regarding all the elements which make up true humaneness can secure us from mistaking an external environmentally progressive civilization for civilization itself. It is only when the yearning to become again a real true human being is kindled in the modern man that he can find his way home out of the universe of errors in which he now gropes forlornly, blinded by the darkness that results from knowledge and the pride of power. Only then is he in the position to fight and toil against the pressure of the conditions of life which threaten his humanity. Reverence for life, considered as an ideal of human existence, material and spiritual, demands that man should strive—by the fullest possible development of all his capacities, and in a spirit of spiritual freedom as extensive as possible—to be true to himself and to take part in all the life around him as a bringer of sympathy and help. He must make an earnest effort to have continually present in his mind all the responsibilities laid upon him, and so both as sufferer and as actor to present an example of living spirituality in his conduct, both as regards himself and as regards the objective world. He dreams of true humanity

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as ethical and religious existence in the atmosphere of world- and life-affirmation which goes with reverence for life.

If it is acknowledged to be the aim of civilization that every individual should attain to true humanity in a type of existence worthy, as far as possible, of human nature, then the uncritical over-valuation of the externals of culture, as we have taken it over from the outgoing nineteenth century, must be dismissed as obsolete. We are steadily developing toward a state of intellectual reflection which enables us to distinguish between the essential and unessential elements of culture. The fog of unspirituality induced by a certain type of culture is losing its power over us. We dare deliberately to face the truth that with our progress in knowledge and power civilization becomes not easier but harder. The problem of the inter-relations between material and spiritual vanishes. We know that we all have to struggle with our environment in order to maintain our humanity, and must take anxious care to transform again into a contest inspired by hope, the almost hopeless battle now waged by many in this respect.

As a spiritual aid in this battle we may offer, then, the general principle that it is wrong to sacrifice a single man to environmental conditions, seeing that this involves his being regarded as a mere human *thing*. The conviction, formulated by so-called thinkers, and popularized in impossible ways, has become current among us, that culture is destined to be the possession of an *élite*, and from the point of view of the masses, is only a means by which to exploit these. And so the spiritual aid to which they have a claim is denied to those who have to struggle for their humanity. The realist philosophy to which we have hitherto assented deliberately teaches this. But reverence for life enters the field against it and creates a mental atmosphere in which the human value and the human dignity which the circumstances of life would deny him are made possible for every human being by the convictions of his fellows. Following

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this the fight has lost its bitterest element. Man has now to maintain himself only against his environment, no longer also simultaneously against his fellow-men.

And again, the general disposition which accompanies reverence for life helps those who have to battle most strenuously to preserve their humanity, by keeping alive in them the notion of this humanity as the supreme good which must be guarded at all costs. It prevents them from going astray one-sidedly in the struggle to lighten the weight of their material fetters, and calls on them to reflect that it is possible even in their present circumstances to give far more play to true humanity and to possess far more inner freedom than they have yet actualized. It helps them to recapture a composure and serenity which they had previously sacrificed.

A spiritualization of the masses is what we need. The vast number of individuals must learn to reflect about their life, and about that which they desire to gain for their life in the struggle for existence, about that which circumstances make difficult for them, and about that which they deny themselves. They lack spiritualization because they have a confused notion of what it really is. They forget to think because elementary reflection about their own being is no longer a familiar atmosphere to them. In that which our time is accustomed to regard as spirituality, and in its substitute for earnest reflection, there is nothing whatever which it comprehends directly as a necessity for its own existence. But once let the idea of reverence for life become a familiar thought with us and we shall have in it a mental force which will work steadily on its whole environment, and a spirituality will become active which will show results in every direction. Even those who have the hardest struggle to maintain their humanity will be led to self-control and serenity, and will at the same time receive powers which they did not possess previously.

Aware as we now all are that the development of true civilization depends before all on the welling up in us of the

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courses of spiritual life, let us eagerly attack the economic and social problems which await us. The greatest possible material freedom for the greatest possible number is one of the first demands of civilization.

We are not daunted by the realization that we have apparently so little power over economic conditions. We know that this is conditioned to a significant extent by the very fact that hitherto facts have warred against facts and emotions against emotions. Our lack of power comes from our sense of the inexorable nature of objective reality. We should have far more power over things if we made up our minds to attack our problems with the determination to solve them by the force of mental conviction. We are overripe for this point of view. The battles waged over questions of economic theories and utopias lacked purpose in every respect and have landed us in our present horrible position. Only one thing remains for us, viz., a radical *volte face*; we must make the attempt to solve our problems in a purposive fashion by means of purposive understanding and faith. Reverence for life is alone in a position to create the moral atmosphere necessary for this purpose, one of understanding and faith, in the strength of which we are united for a definite end, and by means of which we attain as much power over circumstances as can ever be possible. And these will only be present when every one shall be able to assume in every one else an attitude of reverence in face of the existence of others, and a real regard for their material and spiritual welfare, and both these as a definite atmosphere of moral conviction rooted within and showing itself in active effort. It is only as a result of reverence for life that we shall be able to form standards of that economic justice in which alone a real mutual understanding is possible. Shall we really be able to make this development an actual fact? We absolutely *must* do so if we are to avoid complete material and spiritual ruin. All our advances in knowledge and power will prove fatal to us in the end unless we retain control over them by a corresponding advance in

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our spirituality. Through the power which we win over the forces of nature we get also a gruesome kind of power over our fellow human beings. With the possession of a hundred machines a single man, or a small group of men, are given control over the lives of all those who run these machines. Through a new invention it becomes possible for one man with a single movement to kill not only a hundred but ten thousand other men. It is not possible in any battle to avoid the destruction of economic and physical values on both sides. Generally what happens is that conqueror and conquered are involved in the same fate. The only way out is that we should mutually renounce the power to injure each other which we now possess. But this is necessarily a spiritual act.

Drunk with the advances in knowledge and power which have come to pass in our time, we forgot to give any attention to progress in human spirituality. We slid heedlessly into pessimism, ready to believe without a thought in all forms of progress whatsoever ; there was but one exception, the spiritual progress of man and of humanity.

Facts call us to reflect, even as the tossings of a capsizing vessel cause the crew to rush on deck and to climb the masts. Faith in the spiritual progress of man and of humanity has already become almost impossible for us. We must force ourselves to it with the courage of desperation. We must turn together to will the spiritual progress of man and of humanity in mutual accord and to base our hopes on it once more. This is the putting of the helm hard to port which must be accomplished if our vessel is to be brought head to wind again, even now at the last moment.

We shall only be capable of this as the result of intelligent reverence for life. Let reverence for life begin to work somehow or other on thought and conviction, and then the miracle will be possible. The power of the elemental and vital spirituality implicit in it is incalculable.

CHURCH AND STATE AS HISTORICAL EXISTENCES AND AS IDEALS OF CIVILIZATION

State and Church are only forms of human association with a view to the development of humanity. The ideals of social-political and religious association are thus determined by the fact that these and similar organisms have a definite purpose with regard to the spiritualization of man and his association for humanizing ends.

It is the fault of our historical sense that the ideals of Church and State do not function amongst us in their true form. The men of the *Aufklärung* supposed that State and Church came into being as the result of considerations of utility. They tried to understand the essential nature of both these entities by means of theories about their origin, in which process all that they really did was to read their own view back into history. It was easy for them to impose such demands of the rational ideal on natural historical growths, because reverence for these was an attitude of mind unknown to them. We, on the contrary, possess this reverence in such a large measure that we experience a feeling of diffidence which prevents us from reconstructing according to theoretical hypotheses what has not originated from these.

But State and Church are not only natural and historical, but at the same time they are still necessary entities. The only way in which reflection can occupy itself with them is to continually attempt to transform them from their actual shape into rational and in every respect purposive organisms. Their existence is only completed and justified by this ability for development.

The natural historical entity offers us only elementary facts which unfold themselves and develop into corresponding but more extensive events. It never offers us the kind of facts in which we can see defined the essential nature of the community, that is to say, the attitude we have to take up with regard to it and the meaning of our membership in it. If we allow the notion of purposiveness to be involved in that of the natural entity, making it a thing which moves of itself toward a definite goal, we import

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a fundamental confusion into our idea of such associations as the two in question. The individual and humanity, both of which are no less natural entities than the two historical organisms under consideration, are robbed of their rights and sacrificed to these by the theory hinted at. The heightened degree of understanding which we bring to bear in order to grasp the real nature of historically originated societies, is thus unable to disallow the claim that State and Church must revolve around the ideals of personality and of humanity as their natural poles and must find in these their ultimate purpose. And so civilization itself demands that State and Church alike should show themselves capable of development. This presupposes that the inter-relation between the collective total and the individual should be something different from what it has been hitherto.

During the last few generations the individual has given up more and more of his own spiritual independence in favour of the State and of the Church. He has become accustomed to take his mental convictions over from them *en bloc* in place of the reverse process, viz., that the convictions to which he has come as an individual should react as a transforming power on State and Church.

This abnormal relation was unavoidable. The individual indeed possessed no environment in which he could be spiritually independent, and therefore he had no general convictions which could be a matter of agreement or difference between himself and the great objective entities with which he came in contact. Besides, he was not in a position in any case to think out effective ideals which might change the nature of actual conditions. All that remained for him was to substitute idealized actuality for the ideal itself, and this is what he did.

But in the world- and life-view which accompanies reverence for life he possesses a set of mental convictions at once reliable and of real productive value. He faces reality with a determination and a hope which he carries fully.

CHURCH AND STATE AS HISTORICAL EXISTENCES AND AS IDEALS OF CIVILIZATION

developed within himself. It is self-evident to him that every association formed between human beings must have as its object the maintenance, fostering and higher development of life, and the production of true spirituality.

The decisive point for the actual effectiveness of that development of State and Church which has as its object the production of a true civilization, is this, that most people should belong to these two organisms with the definite intention of securing their help in practising reverence for life and the ideals which spring from the same. Thus a spirit will arise in both these which will work toward their transformation in the direction of the ethical and the spiritual.

It is impossible to estimate exactly the course of this process. Nor is there any need to do so. The disposition to reverence for life is a power which acts purposively in every respect. It is only necessary that it should be present in sufficient strength and constancy, and the desired transformation will certainly be effected.

* * *

If the Church is to fulfil its task it must unite men in the pursuit of elemental, intelligent, ethical religiousness. In the past it has done this at best very incompletely. How far it is from being what it ought to be has been shown by its absolute failure in the war. It was its duty to call men away from the struggle engendered by national prejudices and emotions, and to urge them to the consideration of the highest ideals. It did not attempt to do this—no, it did not really earnestly attempt it. It was too much the historical and the organized community and too little simply and immediately religious; therefore it allowed itself to be conquered by the spirit of the time and mixed the dogmas of nationalism and of objective realism with religion. There was only one tiny miniature church, the community of the Quakers, which undertook to defend the absolute

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validity of reverence for life, as we find it in the religion of Jesus.

The mental atmosphere and disposition, created by reverence for life is able to work at the transformation of the Church toward the ideal of a religious community, because it is itself deeply religious. In all historically formulated faiths it seeks to give currency to the ethical mysticism of union with the eternal will—which makes itself known in us as Will-to-live—as being the elemental and essential part of piety. In that it gives the central position to the most vital and universal part of piety it leads the various religious communities away from the narrow paths of their historical pasts and sets them on the high road of mutual comprehension and unity.

But the mental atmosphere of reverence for life effects even more than this. Not only does it draw the existing historical religious communities out of their purely historical existence and lead them to develop along the more ideal line of the purely religious community; it also exerts its influence in the domains of irreligion where these communities can effect nothing. There are many irreligious among us. They have become so in part through lack of intelligent thought and lack of world-view, and in part because intellectual sincerity does not allow them to retain the traditional religious world-view. The world- and life-view of reverence for life makes it possible for these irreligious people to experience the fact that every really intelligent world- and life-view is of necessity religious. Ethical mysticism reveals to them the fact that the religion of love is really a necessity for thought, and leads them back on to the paths from which they had believed themselves for ever alienated.

It is indispensable that the transformation of the social and political community, like that of the religious, should be the result of an impulse working outward from within.

It is true that faith in the possibility of the modern State being transformed into the civilized State is a heroic act;

THE CRIMINALIZING AND ETHICIZING OF HUMAN RELIGIOUS
AND POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS

The modern State finds itself at the moment in a position of unparalleled material and spiritual misery. Collapsing under a weight of debt, torn asunder by economic and political quarrels, stripped bare of all moral authority, and scarcely able to maintain any real authority at all, it has to struggle for its very existence amid the fresh needs which are continually pressing upon it. Whence is it to derive the power to develop into a true civilized State in the midst of these adverse circumstances? It is impossible to foresee through what crises and catastrophes the modern State is still fated to pass. Its position is especially endangered by its having already far over-stepped the limits of its natural effectiveness. It has become an organism which is extraordinarily complicated, which has a finger in every pie, which tries to regulate everything, and for that very reason functions in every regard without sufficiently definite aims. It desires to control economic life in the same way as spiritual life. And in order to make its influence felt in this extensive way it makes use of an apparatus which already constitutes a danger in itself.

Somehow, and at some time, the modern State must emerge from its financial distress and contract its activities to accord with normal standards. But how it is ever to get back again into a natural and healthy position is still an unsolved riddle.

Thus the tragic point is that we are at present necessarily members of the unsympathetic and unhealthy modern State, and yet possess the will to transform it into a real civilized State. An apparently impossible effort of faith in the power of the spirit is demanded from us. The ethical world- and life-view alone will furnish us with the necessary energy.

Living, as we do, in the actual modern State, yet thinking the thoughts of the ideal civilized State, we inevitably strip the former of the illusion which it formerly cherished with regard to itself. It can recover consciousness and see itself as it is only when the generality of men take up a critical

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position with regard to it. The absolute impossibility of maintaining the present state of affairs must become a general conviction before we can expect any improvement.

But, at the same time, as a result of reflection about the true nature of the civilized State, the view must be generally accepted that all external measures directed to uplift and heal the modern State, however purposive they may be, will yet have a very incomplete effect as long as the spirit which inspires it remains unaltered. Therefore it is that we endeavour, as far as lies in the power of our thought, to lead the modern State, nay, to force it, up to the level of the spirituality and of the moral tone which it ought to reach, according to the ideas which emanate from reverence for life. We demand of it a higher degree of spirituality and of ethics than has ever been required of any State in the past. Progress can only be attained by striving for the true ideal.

The suggestion is constantly pressed on us, that the State cannot continue to exist on a basis purely of integrity, justice and ethical considerations, but that in the long run it will be obliged to take refuge in opportunism—we are told that this is the teaching of experience. But we smile at this so-called experience. Its teaching is indeed contradicted by the dreary results which we see around us. Thus we have the right to proclaim the very contrary as true wisdom, namely, that for the State, as for the individual, true power is to be sought in spiritual and in ethical sources. The State is nourished by the confidence and loyalty of its members; it finds its life in the reliance placed on it by other States. Opportunist action may be able to point to momentary successes—they are always ephemeral. In the end it leads inevitably to failure.

Ethical world- and life-affirmation, then, requires of the State that it strive to become an ethical and spiritual personality! It presses its point obstinately. It refuses to be frightened away by superficial jeers. The wisdom of to-morrow has a different voice from that of yesterday.

A new disposition must control the actions of the State

THE SPIRITUALIZING AND ETHICIZING OF HUMAN RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS

before it can attain to real inward peace ; it is only through such a new attitude of mind affecting the inter-relations of States, that a mutual understanding can come into being which will put an end to their ruinous quarrels ; modern States will only rid themselves of their present debt-laden condition when they learn to regard their overseas neighbours in a different way from that usual at the present time.

Such moralizing about the ideal civilized State is no new thing. But it has a peculiar significance at this time when the modern State has fallen into a bankruptcy of health and happiness because of its refusal to take the way of the spiritually ethical. And again, it has received a fresh access of authority from the fact that the significance of the ethical impulse in its whole breadth and depth is exposed to the full light of day in the world- and life-view which goes with reverence for life.

Thus it comes about that we are freed from the necessity of conceiving the ideal civilized State in accordance with the notions of nationalism and of nationalist culture, and may turn back to the deeper and simpler view, and regard this ideal State as identical with the State which allows itself to be led by ethical convictions as to the true nature of civilization. It is in reliance on the power of such convictions, emanating from reverence for life, that we propose to ourselves the task of making such a State an objective reality.

Feeling ourselves responsible to convictions of the nature described, we look away over peoples and States to humanity as such. It is the future of man and of humanity which is the object at once of care and of hope to those who have given their allegiance to ethical world- and life-affirmation. To be free from such care and such hope is poverty ; to be dedicated to them is true wealth. And so it is our comfort in this time of stress, without seeing clearly what is that better future which may await us, to prepare the road for it in reliance on the spiritual force of that civilized humanity whose coming we expect.



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